

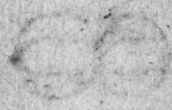
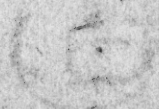
THE
HEIRESS DI MONTALDE;
OR, THE
CASTLE OF BEZANTO.

VOL. II.

INTERESS IN WATLAND

OF THE

CASE OF BRANCO



THE
HEIRESS DI MONTALDE;
OR, THE
CASTLE OF BEZANTO:
A NOVEL.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY
MRS. ANNE KER.

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,
TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE PRINCESS AUGUSTA SOPHIA.

VOL. II.

London:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;
AND SOLD BY EARL AND HEMET, FRITH STREET,
SOHO.

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THE
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CHAPTER X.

On what strange grounds we build our hopes and
fears!

Man's life is all a mist, and in the dark

Our fortunes meet us.

..... How conscience can upbraid!

It forces her not only to reveal,

But to repeat what she would most conceal.

THOUGH it was not yet dark, there
being but little light coming into the
west gallery made it awfully dismal;
every thing was hid by the dusky veil of
twilight. The marble statues, that stood

at separate distances, excited a tremor I am not able to describe; and each made me start as I approached. I could not prevail on Lifette to accompany me any farther than the corridor, from whence, with a palpitating heart, I stepped forward to the western chamber. Agitated by a secret awe I gently tapped at the door, and found it yield to my hand. I proceeded forward, looking fearfully round, but saw no one.

Advancing along an elegant arched passage hung with beautiful paintings, and handsomely and tastefully illuminated, the contrast between the brilliant appearance of this place, and the dismal gloom of the west gallery, excited an indescribable surprise. I perceived at the end a door open, which, by the distant glimpse, seemed a most superb apartment.

Here I stopped, hesitating—fearful to proceed, as equally unwilling to return, and what I saw seemed illusion all.

As I stood wrapt in amazement, I heard a voice say, "Oh, you are come! I have been waiting for you with the greatest impatience." Turning to see from whom the voice proceeded, to my surprise I found it to be the very person who had so often excited my alarm.

I was led into this apartment; the grandeur of which was sufficient to dazzle the senses, so astonishingly superb to what any other part of the Castle was, though all was elegant. My conductor led me to a sofa, and, putting aside a long brown satin cloak, discovered a lady of great beauty, about the age of thirty I imagined.

Mute with astonishment, I gazed on this charming lady, whose dress was elegant beyond expression, it being white satin, beautifully embroidered in deep borders, and festoons of drapery in gold. Her hair was tastefully decorated with bandeaus of embroidered white satin, fastened with diamond pins; the hair

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in ringlets, and flowing on her shoulders; and a long veil of white crape, with embroidered ends, fell elegantly from the crown of her head-dress, and gracefully mingled with the rest of her apparel. I thought her very elegant, but not superior to my loved Palmira, whose dress was generally on the same plan; for the Count was very partial to richness of dress—Palmira, to simple elegance, in which she excelled.

I looked on the lady—then on the rich apartment, whose walls were decorated with costly paintings by the most celebrated masters, among which appeared a very elegant portrait of Emilia di Udino—and again sunk into silence, not knowing absolutely what to say, as I must confess I never was so much at a loss for words in my life.

The lady observing my confusion said, “I wrote, and gave you a letter last night; perhaps it a little surprised you. I am inclined to think it excited
a desire

a desire of knowing by whom it was written." I bowed, in assuring her it really *had excited my curiosity*.

"I thought as much," she replied: "what I have to say is of a very particular nature. If you can favour me with your attention, you shall be informed of my story; for doubtless you must be surprised to behold a person of my appearance in the Castle of Bezanto."

She entreated me to drink a glass of wine, and took some herself. Then sitting familiarly down by my side, she thus began:

ZEPHYRINE'S HISTORY.

"YOUR astonishment will probably exceed your belief, when you hear the particulars of my life. But you must first promise me most faithfully and solemnly, not to relate to Palmira, the beautiful Heiress di Montalde, what

I am going to say, till she is perfectly recovered. Heaven knows, I would not give her pain, or retard her recovery, for the world!"—I assured her I would not—and she proceeded:

"Know then, that I am the wife of the Count di La Rosa. We have been married these twelve years, but the particulars I will truly relate."—I need not inform you, that my surprise was extreme.

"My parents were natives of France; they resided near a place called Caudebec, in Normandy. I had a twin sister, who was extremely like me. I was called Zephyrine, my sister was Seraphine. Our parents lived comfortably, though not great, but were contented with what fortune allotted them. My sister and I attended them in all their occupations.

"I will pass over a life of ease, joy and content, till I arrived at the age of eighteen.

eighteen. Then it was that the Count, being on an excursion in France, saw me, and became greatly enamoured.

"I was no less so of him. The grandeur of his appearance exceeding every thing I had ever seen, perhaps raised an ambition in the heart of a girl accustomed to see only the humble peasant. He demanded me of my parents in marriage. They were enraptured at a proposal so advantageous to their daughter's future establishment. Their consent agreed with my wishes; we were married, and my friends grew rich by the bounty of the Count.

"We staid in France, in a private manner, for about three months, when it became necessary for the Count to return to Italy.

"I observed, the nearer we approached to Italy the more gloomy the Count appeared. I could not refrain from asking the occasion. After a short time he thus told me :

B 4

" " My

“ ‘ My Zephyrine knows I am the eldest son of the Duke di M——. Dare I tell you, I must not acquaint him with our marriage? His rigour is unbounded; and his ambition, I am sorry to say it of my father, but his ambition exceeds every thing ever known. He has been seeking for all the rich heiresses in Italy, to propose one for my wife; but my heart was never inclined to yield to any, till I saw you. I have declared I will never marry a person he disapproves, and have enjoined him not to desire me to marry, if it is not my wish. Avaricious in the extreme, I believe he would sacrifice all the world for riches. Need I tell you, that our marriage must be kept secret? I have taken the opportunity of speaking my reasons to your father and mother, who have promised to be secret for your happiness.

“ ‘ My father has resigned me the Castle of Bezanto, and the villa of Olma gi Tortona. I am fond of Bezanto, but

but must inform you his reasons for not choosing to keep the noble mansion of Bezanto for himself.

““ Many years ago, when he was quite a young man, Bezanto was the property of a lady, at whose death, by the will of her father, it came to the Duke di M——. Her father in his lifetime had desired her to marry the Duke; but her affections being otherways engaged, she dissembled, till her father's death put it in her power to refuse.

““ My father loved her; but whether from affection, or the desire to have Bezanto in his possession, I know not; but he actually went to Bezanto to claim her hand. She disdainfully refused. He then claimed the Castle of Bezanto, as his right; but that she determined never to give up while she lived.

““ His treatment of that lady was not to his honour, and I will pass as much as I possibly can over in silence.

““ The sight of her uncommon beau-

ty created an affection, though it hurt his mind to confess it, and know he should be refused. His ideas of virtue were not very high, and he resolved at all events to obtain her, either for his wife or mistress. He tried all means to gain her esteem ; but she hated him, as an intruding enemy, who had taken unlawful possession of her right, and whom she found determined to invade her virtue and peace of mind.

“ “ She chose the western part of the Castle, where she retired to save herself from the repeated insults of a man she detested ; while he continued to usurp the remainder, in hopes to make her accede to his proposals. He made every place secure, lest she might escape, and raise friends to oppose his tyranny.

“ “ One day, being as it were a prisoner in her own house, my father was alarmed, that the servant could gain no answer. He thought it obstinacy, and, as he had treated her very ill the preceding

ing

ing day, imagined she would not see him, and believed she would be glad to open the door by the next morning;—but all was silent still.

“ ‘ He then determined to force the door; but his horror was extreme, as well as that of the attendants, to find her dead on the floor, having cut her throat! —A small knife lay beside her, and on the table a paper, addressed to my father, wherein she charged him with being the cause of her untimely death, ‘ by persecuting her with his odious addresses; that she foresaw the treatment she had to expect of a man void of honour or humanity; and that she would rather die, than submit to proposals that were an insult to her honour and understanding; that she resigned her life to free herself from a tyrant, whose cruelty, avarice, and injustice, knew no bounds.’ Thus died Emilia di Udino.

“ ‘ My father was extremely shocked at an event so full of horror. Too late

he found he really loved Emilia di Udino, but had taken the wrong method to gain her affections, and he soon after left the Castle. Remorse oppressed his heart, but his avarice did not droop. The image of Emilia di Udino was ever present to his eyes; and I have heard his old servant say, who lived with him at the time the above happened, that he would sit and talk as if conversing with her, and endeavouring to extenuate his fault, in replies that often alarmed him; and so forcibly was he affected with the remembrance, that he frequently, addressing a stranger, would call them Emilia! In a few years after, to endeavour to banish uncomfortable thoughts, and draw his mind from the recollection of Emilia di Udino, and his cruel treatment of that lady, he married my mother the young Duchess di C—, heiress of the illustrious house of S—, a lady whom he never loved, and barely treated with civility. I have
been

been often shocked at his behaviour. Alas! he never knew the joys of domestic happiness—how then is a person of that description capable of judging for the happiness of others? Domestic felicity is the first and greatest blessing a mortal can know; but the cultivation of that felicity is very little attended to, I am sorry to say.

“ Whatever were his sensations, I know not, but he resided no more at Bezanto: that place, once the centre of all his wishes and ambition, was now neglected, and suffered to go to decay. Superstition is often the attendant of ambitious minds. My father had his share; for he never enjoyed one happy hour in Bezanto after the death of Emilia di Udino, and at length wholly deserted it.

“ As I grew up, I entreated this beautiful edifice for my residence, as I was always much attached to it; which he readily resigned.

“ At Bezanto, then, I have resided alter-

alternately with my villa at Tortona, and do not find myself so happy any where as at Bezanto. I thought proper to relate this account to you, lest any of my servants might cause you needless alarms, by a foolish recital of what no one but myself knows the rights of ; and I trust your good sense will banish all idle fancies.

“ In the next place, though you may, no doubt, be surprised at such a strange projection, Bezanto being the only place where I can possibly remain with you unknown to him, you must reside there. I shall be chiefly at Bezanto; and as he seldom visits there, our marriage will be unsuspected, and in a short time I may be able to acknowledge you in the face of the world.”

“ I must own the Count's recital caused me some uneasiness. I did not in my heart approve this project, but our situation rendered it necessary. I had heard of the Duke's ill character
for

for avarice and oppression, while I remained at my peaceful retirement at Caudebec.

“ However, there was now no retreating; and my husband, of whom I was very fond, designing to pass the chief of his time at Bezanto somewhat reconciled me to the irksomeness of my situation.

“ We arrived safe at the Castle. The servants, who were very fond of him, received us with transport. He soon made our marriage known to them, and demanded their promise of being secret on this business; and, if the Duke should ever hint a desire of coming to the Castle, to intimate their thoughts that it was troubled.

“ I was soon reconciled to my situation, the presence of the Count being a material consolation. A carriage, purposely for me, came every day to the back gates that lead into the forest of pine, for the convenience of giving
me

me an airing. Every one was studious to please and obey me; my Lord's bounty purchased their concealing our affairs. The most unpleasing part of my concealment was the want of company for variety; for, as the Count was supposed to be a single man, of course I never appeared to his company. He very frequently had visitors, who staid sometimes for a fortnight together; at which intervals, I always retired to this western part of the castle; and not being able to walk in the garden, or go out in open day, took the advantage of every fine evening, after all in the Castle were at rest beside my Lord. And that I might not be discovered by going through the great corridor, the broad stairs, or the vaulted hall, I always went down a narrow flight of steps, that led by winding descents to a private door that communicated with a prison used in former times. Here the Count had a passage branching from it
that

that twisted to the dungeon gate, which opens into the garden; and by this means I have walked many evenings unseen and unsuspected.

“ All the servants knew of my evening excursions, so none ever took any notice if they saw me.

“ To enliven the heavy hours, which sometimes would intrude, the Count's servants were treated with more familiarity than is usually found by Italian domestics; the house-keeper I had always a partiality for, and she has been a very worthy servant to me.

“ Here then we resided in quiet content for four years; when the Duke came suddenly one night, and told his son he designed to stay a week with him.

“ Every possible attention and respect was paid him. I hastened to this place, and was concealed. The Duke expressed his sorrow at having left this valuable estate; but an incident, as accidental

tal as undesigned, made him return to his former opinion.

“ The Duke’s room overlooked the garden, and is the one you occupy ; where, on the third night after his arrival, being beautiful moon-light, I had a desire to take a walk. By the glimpse of the moon he perceived me come from the dungeon. The most afflicting terror possessed his mind. He hastily called his servant, and asked, ‘ if he did not see something ? ’—He answered ‘ No. ’—‘ Look there ! ’ said he, ‘ do you not see it stalking among the trees ? ’—‘ Not I, indeed, my Lord, ’ replied the man, perhaps knowing his master’s agitated mind. ‘ You do, ’ cried the Duke, and say No, purposely to deceive me. Look ! do you not see it now ?—You do, I am sure you do, but will not own it. Tell me the truth. ’—‘ What, that that looks so like Signora Emilia does your grace mean ? ’—‘ Signora Emilia dost thou say ? ’ hastily interrupted the Duke :
‘ Ah !

‘ Ah! I think myself it is like Signora Emilia. Run!—fly!—call my son!—call all the servants!—I will be convinced.’

“The servant being used to his Lord’s fallies of passion, and being an old attendant, immediately obeyed; and soon after Isabel, who had overheard their discourse, came to him, and asked what was the matter. ‘Matter?’ said he; ‘Look! do you see any thing there?’—‘Alas! my Lord, that dreadful figure is there again!—I am sure I have been often frightened out of my wits,’ she replied.

“‘What, then, have you seen it before?’ eagerly interrogated the Duke.—‘Forgive me, my Lord, when I declare what I know,’ said she; ‘for we forbear mentioning it to the Count, for fear of offending him;—but we should be all happy in the Castle, if it was not for that. But the western chambers
are

are so troubled, that my Lord the Count makes no use of them at all, and we never pass beyond the great staircase.'—

'Good Heaven!' exclaimed he, 'the western chambers?—and they are never used!'

" 'Nobody will go near them, my Lord. Why, my Lord, it is only the night before last, that I saw that very figure, as I was on the top of the stairs; and looking along the corridor—there it was. Lord help me, I was so frightened!' — 'Ah!' replied the Duke, 'that was the very day I came here. I am still persecuted. Her spirit still seeks revenge. It is now fifty-six years since she died.'

" Here the Count entered with the Duke's attendant, and expressed his sorrow at his being made uneasy by coming to Bezanto. 'And I will go to-morrow,' said the Duke; 'I will not stay to be tormented here any longer.'

" This

“ This seemed a night of confusion; and when the Count came to my apartment, he informed me of his father’s fear—and his hopes, that he would not come to Bezanto any more to interrupt us.

“ The Duke was as good as his word; for he went away early in the morning, and never since then has been inside the Castle—although he frequently has called to speak to his son at the gate.

“ Thus then has our time passed on since that period—the Duke, ever desirous for his son to marry, the Count as often alleging he had no inclination. I remember hearing him mention with concern the proposed alliance between him and the Heirefs of Montalde, daughter of his most esteemed friend. To refuse that lady without assigning a cause was impossible, yet he delayed his visit as long as he could without rudeness; when

when a misfortune happened to me, which made a strange alteration in the Count's affairs.

"I will not trespass any longer on your present time; but, if you will favour me with your company to-morrow—or perhaps you will return after you leave your friend, to hear me conclude my story——But, above all, I entreat you to be secret, and say nothing of what I have told you—no, not to your friend."

I assured her I would not, as I dreaded the effect it might produce on her recovery. But being without a light, I was obliged to borrow one of the lady, as I designed to go to the library before I returned; so bidding her good night, and promising to see her again next morning, I left the western chamber.

In what a confusion was my mind at this unexpected recital!—It required some little time to calm it, and I turned

ed into the library to take some books, though I was not very attentive which, and sat down a short time to recover: I then, composing myself as well as I was able, repaired to the chamber of Palmira.

CHAPTER XI.

In struggling with misfortunes
Lies the true proof of valour.

THE Count was still there. He fixed the most scrutinizing eyes on my countenance, which seemed to penetrate my heart, and increased my agitation. I turned my head aside to conceal the various emotions of my soul. As yet I had heard but part of his story, therefore was unable to judge how far he was guilty in imposing on my unhappy friend, whose situation appeared every day more distressing.

The silver candlestick which I held in my hand seemed to draw his attention.

“ You

"You have some books, my dear," said Palmira, "what are they?"—"I really do not know," I replied; "I brought these, but declare I cannot tell their contents."

The Count, whose anxiety appeared in every gesture, though unable to make any direct inquiries, said, "Why, my dear young friend, you have been long enough to read the title of every book in the library. But tell me—" taking my hand and looking stedfastly in my face—

"your natural relish for every thing of antiquity has led you to take a survey of those remote chambers—Is it not so?"

Embarrassed in the extreme, I replied:

"I have been in the western chambers, my Lord;" which I found he perfectly understood; for he dropped the subject, and we soon after sat down to play at cards—he continuing in the room till after I had taken leave of Palmira for the night.

Lisette was overjoyed to see me again,

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and

and made numerous inquiries; but I did not think proper to inform her. I only said, we had nothing to fear from supernatural appearances; and soon after we retired to rest. But I perceived Lifette was visibly disappointed.

My mind was too much agitated to feel serene repose. However, I fell into a sort of confused slumber; and when I awoke, I was much surprised to find poor Lifette watching me with great attention.

She told me, she was very certain something shocking had happened to me, for I had slept very disturbedly. "And, Holy Mary!" said she, "I fear by your manner, Signora, that something very terrible afflicts your mind, that you will not own to me. My dear lady scarcely deigns to answer me; and you, Signora, begin to follow her example. Alas! what will become of us? Oh! dear Signora, I hate this Castle every day more and more; and if you are afraid of what

what we have seen——” I interrupted her, assuring her to the contrary ; for I longed to rise, and go to the western chambers.

As soon as I had breakfasted, I took the earliest opportunity of visiting Zephyrine, who recommenced her story. It ran thus :

“ Every thing passed on well, till about two years and a half ago ; when having a particular desire to see my relations, the Count permitted me to go to Caudebec, where I was to remain six weeks ; during which time he was at Rome on very important business with his father.

“ My father and mother were overjoyed to see me so unexpectedly, as was also my dear unfortunate sister Seraphine. I passed a short delightful time with them. My sister being desirous to accompany me, I thought I could be happy in her society, if she would reside with me at Bezanto ; it would af-

ford me infinite pleasure in my retired situation, especially as I did not fear the Duke di M——'s coming to make inquiries who she was.

“ Joyfully acceptable was this proposal to Seraphine. We took an affectionate leave of our parents, and set forward to Italy. We crossed the Alps at Mount St. Bernard, and, taking a hired carriage from an inn at Martinach, proceeded the nearest way to Bezanto.

“ It was dark as we passed the corner of a lonely forest. Seraphine was dressed exactly like me, so that the difference could scarcely be distinguished between our two persons. I had just ordered the driver to make all possible speed to the nearest inn, as I would defer my journey till the morning; when we were surrounded by a number of banditti who started on a sudden from amidst the trees, and with menaces dragged us from the carriage, each declaring, ‘ ’Tis she !’

“ My

" My heart misgave me. I shuddered with the idea of being beset by order of the Duke, who I feared had discovered our marriage, and had taken this method of revenge. What else could I think ? ' It is she ! ' re-echoed the whole band exultingly.

" My unfortunate sister, in struggling to free herself from the ruffian, who was dragging her from my feeble arms, received a blow on her head. She fell, and immediately expired.

" Frantic with grief and despair, I gazed on the sad remains of my dear Seraphine, and in unutterable anguish lamented my being so unfortunate to bring her from the arms of her affectionate parents, to be cruelly murdered by a band of unfeeling ruffians in this horrid place.

" They had a chaise in waiting at some distance, into which they forced me; for my efforts were ineffectual to the number of my wicked persecutors.

I was compelled to submit in silence, though I first on my knees entreated a farewell embrace of my dear lifeless sister; which melancholy satisfaction they reluctantly granted.

“ Seated by the side of a most desperate-looking wretch, whose ruffian aspect chilled my very heart, he held a drawn sabre in his hand, in a menacing manner, as if I had been the worst of criminals. We travelled swiftly for several hours; at length we seemed to be ascending a steep acclivity, and I was ordered to alight, as the mules could not go up with the carriage.

“ The grey dawn of morning appeared to be tingeing the summits of the hills. I turned fearfully round to behold the dreary prospect, and, by my situation, fancied I was on some remote part of the Alps.

“ After we had gained the summit, we descended again into a valley; where passing through a grove of thick trees,

trees, we came to the gates of a Castle, whose ruined walls struck me with horror.

“ I was conducted through a range of ancient and dreary apartments—the sight alone was sufficient to strike one with terror—and being conducted into a large spacious Gothic chamber meanly furnished, my savage-looking conductor left me—but took the precaution to lock the door, and bar it; so that I found every possibility of escape frustrated.

“ Here I was left for the space of an hour, during which time I gave way to the violent grief that oppressed me. For myself I dreaded little, compared to the afflicting certainty, that my beloved Seraphine, in accompanying me, had lost her precious life. Oh! there was distraction in the thought, and tears will for ever flow, when I call to mind that hapless day and my irrecoverable loss.

“ I could not banish from my mind the thought that the Duke di M——
C 4 had

had hired these ruffians to intercept my return to Bezanto. So prepossessed was I with this idea, that I determined to conceal who I in reality was, and to deny positively, if they really supposed me the wife of the Count di La Rosa, knowing that if I confessed my marriage it would involve us both in ruin. In the midst of these melancholy conjectures I heard the door harshly turned by the key; and day shining through the casements shewed me a tall, haughty-looking man, who surveyed me very scrutinizingly, and in a surly tone of voice asked who I was.

“Not knowing what to reply, I hesitatingly said, ‘That I made no doubt, but the men who brought me there could tell, or why did they seize me?’—‘You do not know where you are, or in whose power,’ he replied, ‘or you would answer more explicit. However, I pardon you for once. You are Signora Montelli, I think.’—‘Oh! no, Signor,’ said

said I, ' I am not indeed, nor did I ever hear the name; but I am a most unhappy young woman.'—'Well then,' he answered, ' tell me clearly and candidly who you are, that I may know how to act; for I begin to think there is some mistake in the business.'

" Still secretly believing that this was a plot of the Duke di M——'s, and this behaviour was to draw me into a confession, I was determined not to involve the Count in the misery which I fancied myself exposed to. I replied, ' Signor, I am the daughter of a Frenchman—poor, but honest—in the province of Dauphiny, near the Piedmontese territories. My father not having sufficient to maintain a very numerous family, myself and my unhappy sister determined to enter the convent of St. Rosalie, at Verona, where a relation is already in the monastic order. Journeying with that intent, we were surrounded by the men who brought me here, and my dear

sister was murdered!—Here I could not refrain tears.—‘Murdered!’ he exclaimed——‘Murdered! say you?’—‘Yes, Signor,’ I sobbed. He turned hastily to the door, and called Livoli; and soon after the man entered who had occasioned me such terror in my miserable journey.

“‘What is this I hear?’ said he, endeavouring to affect ignorance: ‘this young lady tells me her sister was killed!’ ‘Quite an accident, I dare say.’—‘Quite accidental,’ replied the other; ‘in truth, I do not know how it happened, Signor; but I brought the right, and so never mind.’

“‘Oh, no!’ exclaimed I—‘it is impossible for me to be the person you intended; I therefore entreat you, allow me to proceed to the convent of St. Rosalie, the only place where I can find comfort after the death of my sister.’

“‘We will talk of that another time,’ replied the Signor. ‘In the mean

mean time I will send you a person to conduct you to a chamber. I am sure you must want repose, and by and by we will see and rectify this mistake.' Saying this, they abruptly left the room, and I remained in the most alarming state of uneasiness and suspense: my thoughts were harassed by the most afflicting reflections, and tortured with the most cruel apprehensions.

"I observed the same caution was taken at their leaving the room as before—to secure the door. A prisoner in this dreary apartment I therefore continued, traversing the room in the most heart-rending anguish, not conceiving what could be their intention or my destiny. In a short time an old woman came to me, rubbing her eyes, with a bunch of keys in her hand, and bade me follow. I stepped forward, but, not knowing whither she was going to lead me, stopped hesitatingly; which made her look round, and ask the reason. 'Alas!'

said I, while the tears fell in quick succession down my cheeks—‘alas! where are you going to lead me?’—‘I have orders to shew you to a chamber, that you may rest yourself after your long journey,’ said she, rather angrily. Silent I followed, knowing my refusal would avail me nothing. She led me through several turnings and windings, and up several small flights of stairs, till we reached the chamber she said was designed for me. She then retired.

“I instantly secured the door, which had strong bolts on the inside. The room was pretty well furnished; but, alas! had it been empty, it would have been the same to me, deprived of my husband, and robbed of my beloved sister. I threw myself on my bed, and gave vent to my grief by a torrent of tears.

“Sleep did not close my eye-lids. I remained lamenting my unfortunate situation, and the misery my absence would cause my Lord, till I heard the
Castle

Castle clock strike ten, and fancied I heard foot-steps pass quickly backward and forward, near my door. I then ventured to open it, in hopes of seeing the old woman servant; but instead of her I saw another, who told me I must seek her in the hall. 'I am a stranger,' I replied, 'and know not the ways of the Castle; will you oblige me by shewing the way?' She silently obeyed, and I was conducted to the hall, where the old woman, whose name was Laura, received me very civilly.

"I did not see the Signor nor any of his men during the day, and found all endeavours to gain information of them vain; so gave up every hope of learning my unhappy fate, and silently yielded to what seemed unavoidable.

"In the course of the day Laura made a pretence to shew me the strength of the Castle—I imagined, to deter me from attempting to escape—and indeed it needed only to be looked on to create terror.

terror. It was enclosed by a strong high fortified wall, at some distance from the body of the Castle, with a deep fossée under it, over which was a draw-bridge, that led from the outer gate, strongly guarded by several men, who had apartments, I learned, in the gate-way. My heart sunk within me at seeing myself immured in this inaccessible prison. How was my dear husband to know where I had been taken?—Oh! never, thought I, will he know what I suffer within these horrid walls! At this idea my heart was ready to break, and I turned from a prospect so horrid, and begged Laura to return into the Castle.

“ When the Signor returned, which was just before sun-set, I was looking through a window that had a view of the entrance from the first gallery. He was attended by a number of men, all in high spirits, and all seemed equal, by the familiarity of their behaviour. They went into an elegant large room, and soon

soon after appeared by the noise to be very merry. I was fearful of asking an interview with him at that time, and was compelled to endure another night of agonizing suspense.

"Day after day passed on, in this strange manner, for above a fortnight. I made many inquiries of Laura, but she *knew nothing*. All she could inform me was, that the Signor had given orders for me to be taken care of, and not to be suffered to leave the Castle. I was so astonished at this mysterious treatment, that I could not refrain expressing it, perhaps a little too severely, to Laura; for I judged, by this time, my Lord must suffer the most afflicting anxiety on my account, as I was to have been at Bezanto full ten days before.

"Another fortnight passed on as the former. I found it impossible to see the Signor. I sent him several messages; but he as frequently returned for an-

swer,

swer, that he could not be spoken with at that time.

“To account for these delays was an impossibility. My only thought was the first, that I was in the power of the Duke di M——, and that he designed to keep me there unknown to his son, and, by affecting ignorance of who I really was, to overwhelm me with affliction, so that at length I should confess the truth.

“Let the true cause be what it will, I could never see the Signor to speak with him. I endeavoured to keep as much with the servants as possible, whereby I hoped to learn something of the reason of my confinement, and of the Signor's behaviour; but all my hopes were to little effect.

“One day as I was walking in the gallery, near dark, I thought I heard the Signor speaking to somebody; and lest I should excite his anger by being seen, I step-

I stepped into a room the door of which stood open. Whatever they might have been saying, I know not; but their discourse apparently concerned me; for the Signor, in reply to the other, said, 'I tell you, it cannot be. She must remain *here*, as long as it is necessary for us to be here; for, if we give her her liberty, she may give information, and then all is at an end.'—The other replied, 'I did not think Livoli would have been such an idiot to mistake; it is a pity the poor girl lost her life, and I really am sorry for it; but he did it to serve me, and my revenge still pursues the ungrateful Lucina.'

"I was anxious to hear more; but they descended the great stairs, and their voice was lost in distance.

"I had now just ground for uneasiness—hearing the Signor say, 'I must remain there as long as it was necessary for them.' Yet I hoped they had no ill design against me, as the Signor had
not

not spoken, or taken any notice of me, since the first time I came to the Castle. This made me not desirous to appear before him, lest he might entertain sentiments that might give me new uneasiness.

“ But in endeavouring to avoid the one I fell into another; for a young man, servant to one of the Signor's guests, fell violently in love with me. At first I was displeased, and angry with myself that I should undesignedly create a passion in this valet, who however, by his manner, appeared a very honest young man, who, like me, at times seemed oppressed with thought. But on second thoughts I fancied the preference he gave me could be of no ill consequence, and might possibly be of some good; for his regard, in all probability, would warn me of any approaching danger.

“ As I had thought, so it happened; for Pierre became very assiduous to please me,

me, and frequently told me what had passed in the room among the Signors, whom in a short time I learnt to be a band of desperate banditti, who were a terror to the surrounding country, though no one could tell their retreat. This accounted for what I heard the Signor say in the gallery, 'that if he gave me my liberty, I might give information.'

"Another time he told me, that they had some suspicions that I had told them wrong; for my appearance, and the clothes they had secured of mine, seemed like a person of consequence; 'and,' said they, 'if we knew to whom she belonged, we might get a good ransom.'—'But then we should betray ourselves,' replied another, 'and we had better remain, or seem to do, in ignorance; for, while we can hold a place of such strength as this, it will be foolish to drive ourselves out of it for the sake of giving liberty to a woman.'

"Thus

“Thus time passed on. I sometimes saw the Signor, and spoke to him. I once ventured to entreat he would allow me to leave the Castle; but he called me ridiculous, and said I asked impossibilities. ‘Are you not well provided for?’ said he; ‘and how many would be happy, to be in no worse a situation! And what a foolish thought it is for such a handsome girl as you to want to go to a monastery!’”

“Two years in mournful anxiety lingered away, I fearful of trusting Pierre, and he fearful of me; when at length he opened his mind and declared how happy he should be to leave the Castle, saying, ‘that his situation was very dreadful to an honest mind, having engaged himself to a gentleman, as he supposed, who was going on his travels; instead of which, he only came to this Castle, where he found his master as desperate as the rest; that he was present when Livoli and his gang seized me, being always sent out
on

on excursions with them, and had been closely watched till lately; but now he was frequently intrusted out alone, or with only a few.

"We then endeavoured to come to a determination how we might escape. But as this was no easy matter, it was impossible to decide hastily; for to chance and opportunity we were obliged to be indebted; though Pierre assured me I should find it very difficult to escape alone, or to know which way to take, if I was so fortunate as to get outside the gates.

"Two months more rolled away without coming to any settled plan. I began to fear I was doomed to perpetual imprisonment in this terrible Castle. I had frequently been on the point of telling him my real situation; but lest he might alter his mind, and inform against me, I deemed it best let alone.

"One day, while most of the Signors
were

were abroad, he called me to a remote part of the building, and whispering told me, 'Now is the only time. Take this,' said he, giving me a bundle, 'and dress yourself as quick as possible.' I am ordered to go to an appointed place, to wait for my master. We will both go. I will wait for you in the first gallery.' I immediately hurried to my chamber, and, to my surprise, found a complete suit of clothes, of the livery worn by the Signor's attendants.

'I did not long hesitate, but bound up my hair, putting it under the hat he had procured. I then took my valuables, which I had concealed in a part of the wall, and soon attended Pierre in the gallery. He took with him a basket, and gave me another, as if going out for provisions, he having been frequently sent for that purpose. Thus we passed the gates without discovery; and as soon as we ascended and descended

the mountain, we bid adieu to the gloomy Castle, and each enjoyed the most transporting ideas.

" We made all possible speed to the nearest inn; where procuring a carriage, I requested I might be carried as near as possible to the Castle of Bezanto.

" In the course of the day we came within sight of this Castle. I then demanded his attention, told him I was married, and that my husband resided at Bezanto; desiring him to accompany me there, that my husband might reward him for the generous services he had rendered me.

" Pierre received this intelligence with great uneasiness, declaring he would rather have me for his wife than all the fortune I would give him, and seemed displeased that I had not told him my real situation sooner. But I soon convinced him of the necessity of concealing my affairs while in the Castle; which
he

he agreed was just, and we soon after reached the Castle of Bezanto.

“ I cannot express the joy shewn by all my servants, when they beheld me return in safety. I too was happy ;— but the absence of my Lord gave me the most poignant uneasiness. I had no money, but borrowed the sum of a hundred pistoles amongst the servants, with which I rewarded Pierre ; and after partaking of some refreshment, and changing clothes for a suit of the Count’s, so that he might not be known, he departed ; though I desired him to call again when the Count was at home, that he might reward him further.

“ I learnt the Count was at Olma di Tortona. Thither I sent a trusty servant to inform him of what had happened, and to speak to him alone. He took a letter, to convince him I had written it.

“ At Olma, the servant heard he was gone to Montpelier. When he reached

reached Montpellier, he learned that the Count had proceeded towards the Pyrenean mountains. Unwilling to return without seeing him, he followed, and at Leucate was fortunate enough to meet him. The Count must explain the rest."

CHAPTER XII.

Oh happiness!
 Thou gaudy bauble, which delud'st the grasp,
 Whene'er we strive to keep thee most secure!
 Have I been fond of fortune's faithless smiles?
 Did e'er I suffer pride to bar my ear
 Against the widow's cry?
 Whence then to me
 This undeserv'd distress? Why must I bear
 So deep a wound in such a tender part?

ZEPHYRINE having finished her narrative, I sat with her some time, making observations on her unfortunate story, when the Count entered. I rose at his approach. He bowed respectfully to me, and, turning to the lady,
 1 asked

asked if she had related her melancholy tale. "I have, my Lord," she replied; "and as you are present, you will be able to give this lady a more minute account of your own affairs than I possibly can."—The Count seemed rather embarrassed; but after a little hesitation he seated himself, and, seeing me all attention, thus began:

"No doubt the account you have heard has much amazed you; but let me entreat, before I proceed, that you will not think me so criminal as to deceive your charming friend. I give you my solemn assurance, that when I married the Heiress di Montalde I firmly believed my dear Zephyrine was no more.

"She anxiously entreated to go to France to see her friends, during an unavoidable absence of six weeks. At length the day arrived which flattered me with her return. I waited with inexpressible anxiety till after sunset. I

then thought she would defer her arrival till morning. Flattered with that hope, I retired to rest; but my slumber was disturbed by the most uncomfortable dreams, and I arose, determining to set out on my way towards Mount St. Bernard to meet her.

“ I had patience to wait till noon before I quitted Bezanto. I rode leisurely for about five miles, when I came to the door of a cottage surrounded by peasants. I stopped, and asked the cause of their being assembled—and received for answer, that a lady had been found murdered in the forest the morning before; and that some peasants going to work had found her, and brought her there.

“ I cannot describe the sudden horror that seized upon my heart, and chilled every sense. A lady murdered!—Heaven! thought I, can it be my Zephyrine? Eager to resolve my doubts, though afraid to be convinced, I sprung from

from my horse, and distractedly rushed into the cottage. But what words can convey the horror, the anguish, the despair, that seized my mind, to behold my dear Zephyrine dead, and extended on a poor bed to be owned!—Gracious God! I thought I should go distracted at the sight. Her charming face was very much disfigured by a violent cut down the left side, and otherwise severely bruised; but still I could discern, by the dress, the form, and the sad remains of countenance, that it was my charming, my affectionate Zephyrine who now lay dead before me.

“No one could give me information of any thing further, than that she was found about six o'clock in the morning of yesterday, by peasants going across the skirts of the forest to their daily labour; and that near the spot were the marks of a carriage, and as if the trampling of many horses; but what, or

whence they came, or where gone, none could tell.

“Grief had so far overpowered me that I was unable to proceed and make further inquiries; but I dispatched my servant to a person to take charge of her funeral, and he then proceeded towards Mount St. Bernard to make inquiries there.

“But all his efforts were vain; for he could not learn where she set out from, and was obliged to return without any satisfactory account.

“To shorten the history of my sufferings, and not tire you with a repetition, I had the unfortunate remains of my dear wife buried at the nearest church, and I then returned in a state of the most complicated distress and agony to Bezanto.

“The secret of my marriage rendered it impossible for me to honour her sacred memory by that external semblance

blance of respect, *mourning*. But what is all the outward show of sorrow? Mine was extreme, and the secret sorrow of the heart is not to be expressed by outward ornament.

“ Soon after this melancholy event, my friend the Count di Montalde earnestly solicited my alliance, by a union with his daughter, which I found no way to evade; but by delays I put off my arrival at his seat for some time. The next news that I heard from him was, that his daughter had chosen a monastic life, and he feared she would determine to settle there. He being rather superstitious, did not choose to bias her inclination in cases of religion, though it gave him extreme uneasiness to have his only daughter prefer the solitude and seclusion of a convent, before the grandeur that awaited her.

“ I must confess her retreat was a great relief to me; for the Count was always proposing the marriage, even at

a time when Palmira was very young. But now I could keep the secret that had so long been buried in my own bosom; for I found it impossible to marry another. While the dear image of my unfortunate Zephyrine was for ever in my thoughts, I could not borrow an idea to bestow on Palmira.

“ Soon after this I foolishly suffered myself to be deluded by some false friends, and, to banish thought, played high and lost. My losses were very considerable; but taking wrong advice, I plunged myself into difficulties more numerous than before. I was persuaded to stake Bezanto, with the hopes of retrieving my losses; but in this I was mistaken, for I lost Bezanto also—my favourite residence, my peaceful retreat, the happy place where I had been blest with Zephyrine. Frantic with this stroke of fickle fortune, I knew not how to proceed. To let my father know my difficulties and my folly, was urging
sure

sure destruction ; for his avarice, I am sorry to say, knows no bounds. However, I made a proposal to the gentleman who won Bezanto, that he should continue all my servants at the Castle for the space of a year. At the expiration, if I could redeem it for a sum specified, it was to be mine again ; if not, it was to remain his property.

“ In this unfortunate state of affairs time rolled away. The Count di Montalde wrote in the mean time to inform me, that his daughter had returned home, unwilling to immure her remaining days in a convent, and hoped now more than ever for my alliance.

“ Not having any particular regard for his daughter, any more than being the beautiful child of my friend, whom I had frequently admired when young (for I had not seen her since she was nine years of age), and not considering that she was now grown a fine young woman, I treated his proposal as a ro-

mantic fit of his extreme friendship and esteem for me; for he had often declared that I should inherit his vast fortune.

“Thus time moved away—I unable to come to any determination of marrying his daughter—till an event happened which forced me to accept the honour he proposed.

“The stated time of my redeeming the Castle of Bezanto was fast approaching. How to retrieve it was a mystery, and I would rather have lost my life than my favourite abode. I made repeated applications to the Duke, but without mentioning my indiscretion and loss; but he positively refused, and blamed my extravagance in not living within my income. I did not dare to tell him that I had lost Bezanto at play. What was to be done? He had heard of the Count di Montalde’s wishes of uniting his daughter with me. He urged the match, assuring me that the Heir-
ess

els of Montalde would remove all difficulties, however severe; and that he would not part with any money during his life.

“What could I do? I thought that, perhaps, if I saw Palmira, my heart might beat in her favour. No other way appeared to give me relief. Yet I was angry with myself, to think that my embarrassed situation, more than a tender partiality, encouraged my consent. I set out for Ranolphi di Placenza with a heart irresolute, and a mind confused and tortured by the most painful sensations.

“My arrival at Ranolphi did not give me much satisfaction. My friend received me with every mark of cordial friendship and respect; but the Countess seemed thoughtful and reserved, and Palmira oppressed with grief. Yet I found her beautiful beyond my expectation. My admiration increased with my surprise, at seeing a person so ele-

gant and every way charming. Such a one, thought I, ought to have the first place in any man's affection; her beauty ought to claim all his love, his respect, and attention. But, alas! mine will be constrained, accustomed as I am to lament my dear Zephyrine. My heart imprest with her memory, and my love for her, will be but a worthless offering.

"The Count was in unusual haste to have the marriage celebrated. I had no opportunity of speaking to my bride; for, on the second day, at night, our marriage took place—else I firmly believe I should have related the true state of my heart.

"Irresolute, I accompanied the Count to the chapel, where I perceived Palmira seemingly much afflicted; and her agitation did not escape me, though my situation I am at a loss to describe. We knelt at the altar; but instead of thinking where I was, or what about, my
whole

whole thoughts were fixed on Zephyrine. I uttered her name. I started from the afflicting ideas that seemed to pursue me, and rose up, looking round for the Count, determining to break off the ceremony. But he was not near. On the other hand, I thought, what would he imagine of a conduct so very extraordinary? At all events, then, let the ceremony proceed; and time, I hoped, might wear off the uneasiness that now oppressed me, in the society of the beautiful, the accomplished Palmira.

"I found Palmira tremble violently as I led her from the chapel; but not knowing to what cause to ascribe it, I forbore to take notice of her anxiety, and in a few days we left the Count's villa for Olma di Tortona.

"Palmira always treated me with every mark of respect, tenderness and condescension; which called forth all my endeavours to make her happy—for

I could

I could not forbear suspecting she was not so. Her health rapidly declined, and we went into France, in hopes of restoring her to convalescence, having first redeemed Bezanto.

"At Montpellier I had the pleasure of meeting your father and you, and received a pleasure in Palmira's attachment to you. As she so seldom saw any company, I feared so much solitude, and abstraction from society, added to her dejection. But at Montpellier I received letters from my friend di Montalde, not at all to my satisfaction. He gave me to understand, that his daughter was violently in love with a young Marquis; but that he having discovered the attachment had broke it off, and insisted on her marrying me—as was always his intention. This letter served to increase my uneasiness and pity for my wife. I judged she suffered some trouble of mind, though she never once complained; and it is for him she mourns

mourns in secret, thought I; for him she shuns all society, and will soon, if her indisposition continues to increase, as it has lately done, quit a world of disappointment and affliction;—that all the riches fortune has blest her with, could not save her from the troubles of mind that fall on those who move in an humbler sphere.

“ Had my situation been other than it was, this intelligence might have been fatal to our peace. The Count’s regard for me made him step beyond the bounds of prudence; but as it was—I being at times taken up with the thoughts of my prior attachment—how was it possible for me to blame Palmira, for an unhappiness of which I was equally guilty, though the object of my affections lay buried in the silent grave?

“ I forbore to acquaint her, lest it might give her pain, especially as her situation became every day more tender, in the hopes of having an heir to my estate,

estate, and our affection increasing. Accompanied by you and Mr. P——, we set out for the Pyrenees; and at Leucate a messenger arrived, which gave me no small uneasiness, though I was much overjoyed.

“This was the news of Zephyrine’s return; an event which I could scarce credit my senses for, and which on many accounts I could not tell Palmira. In the first place, how did I know but that she might suspect me guilty of deceiving her? which Heaven is my witness I was not; for the Count di Montalde is alone to blame, especially as he knew her attachment to another. Next I dreaded the effect such a recital might have on her, as her health was so much impaired; I feared it might, by too much alarming her, perhaps put a period to her life;—and if, by my telling the true state of my situation, it should reach the Duke, then all the years of secrecy were vain. The Duke’s advanced age,
being

being in his eighty-second year, had given me expectations of being soon uncontrouled. As soon as that time arrived, concealment was no longer necessary. What a complication of anxieties was I now plunged into! Every hour appeared an age while I remained in France, where I was compelled to stay, to avoid rudely leaving Palmira unprotected.

“ At length she proposed returning to Italy, which was gladly accepted by me. We returned to Tortona. But my impatience to arrive at Bezanto, and eagerness to know the mystery which had led me to believe Zephyrine dead, and where she could have remained during a period of two years and three months—this desire preyed severely on my heart. I counted the slow-paced hours till we arrived in Italy. This continual anxiety soured my temper, and gave an air of impatience and unkindness

kindness to my manner and actions.— Even Palmira, I sometimes fancied, appeared grieved at the unavoidable change. My situation was miserable. I also feared I had rendered her miserable also; for, from the hour I received the transporting intelligence that Zephyrine lived, that she now inhabited the Castle of Bezanto, I could no longer entertain a partiality for Palmira. Indeed, I often looked on her with pity and concern, as a most unfortunate woman, whom I had contributed to load with additional misfortunes. I often was on the point of declaring to her the true state of my heart and affairs, and making her my friend and confidante, rather than let her suspect I treated her with indifference; but the delicacy of her constitution and present situation made me forbear. You was a witness, how eager I was to quit Tortona. Need I say, the happiness

happiness I enjoyed in seeing my Zephyrine restored, engrossed all my thoughts?

“ My time passed in uninterrupted happiness, till Palmira requested permission to come to Bezanto, in a manner so urgent, that I could no way refuse without revealing the secret that so much embarrassed all my actions.

“ She came——though I would have given the world for her to have staid away till after she had lain-in; when I designed to make her acquainted with all my concerns, and offer her every reparation in my power for an action unavoidable and unintended.

“ I then desired Zephyrine to seek an interview with you, and relate the situation of our affairs, that you, in the soothing voice of friendship, might break it to Palmira, and thereby soften the severity of a truth, which sooner or later must be known. I feared to trust myself

myself with the recital ; it would seem like insulting her sufferings.

“ You, Miss P——, cannot have an idea how much I lament the ill-fated circumstances that have transpired during the period of these last twelve months. I feel the most poignant distress for the Marquis di St. Beralti's sufferings, as I am well convinced he loved her with the tenderest affection ; and I call Heaven to witness, that, had I known the true state of her heart when I first arrived at Ranolphi, I would have refused her offered hand.”

Here the Count finished his part of the narrative ; and I confess my heart seemed wonderfully affected at their misfortunes. I could not harbour the idea that he had married Palmira di Montalde with a design to deceive her ; every circumstance appeared to confirm it an unfortunate accident. I could view it in no other light, and hoped, when Pal-
mira

mira was acquainted with particulars, she might think the same. Though the mortification of being in such a situation must be great, yet, as she never loved the Count, and being compelled to marry him against her inclinations, I trusted she would be glad of the release, as she was now her own mistress by the death of her parents.

I thought I might venture to tell him some particulars concerning her; and therefore said, that she had revealed to me the true cause of her sorrows, and had given me her solemn assurance, that she never had the most distant hint from her father of a marriage with the Count di La Rosa till two days previous to his arrival, at which time her affections were fondly and unalterably fixed on the Marquis di St. Beralti; and till that day she never knew the Count di Montalde had any dislike to their attachment, which he could not avoid seeing, though he never mentioned the subject. On that day

day she was forbid ever more to think of or speak to the unhappy Marquis di St. Beralti; and her reason for so urgently desiring permission to come to the Castle of Bezanto, was to put herself more immediately under her husband's protection—as she had seen him—and the certainty that he sought every opportunity of endeavouring to let her know his sufferings. That grieved at the distressing situation of the Marquis, whom she once tenderly loved, but now could not think of without a crime, and unable, in her state, to alleviate his griefs, she had in a manner suddenly departed from Olma, without scarce giving any previous information, lest he should attempt to see her again; hoping at Bezanto to banish every idea of a man, whom in spite of all her endeavours to the contrary she could not help loving.

“Ah!” exclaimed the Count, “what a miserable life ours has been! I had
always

always my griefs and concealments. Palmira's afflictions are no less than mine. Yet may I hope for her friendship? We should be happy if she will allow us that, and that she will see Zephyrine this afternoon, to clear up all misunderstandings and suspicions."

I rose, and, curtsying, said I would acquaint her, and soon after took my leave.

CHAPTER XIII.

I care not, Fortune! what you me deny;
 You cannot rob me of free nature's grace;
 You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
 Through which Aurora shews her bright'ning face;
 You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
 The woods, and lawns, by living stream at eve.
 Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
 And I their toys to the great children leave:
 Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave.

PALMIRA was as usual very grave, and after several attempts to relate the business I was going to speak of, which I confess was the most disagreeable I ever recited, I at last accomplished it—though I had much rather have been spared the telling. She listened, with silent deep

deep attention, till I concluded, without once interrupting me, which raised my wonder at her patience and resignation. Yet during the recital she could not refrain tears, and when I had finished they flowed abundantly.

When she recovered from this lethargy of grief, she said: " My heart was going to upbraid the Count for concealing his affairs from me. He surely might have trusted to my generosity before, as he relies on it now:—mutual confidence might have softened the severity of secret afflictions. But have not I been guilty of the same unpardonable silence? Witness, Heaven! I never breathed in his presence the name of the unfortunate Beralti! So then, as I may accuse the Count of secrets, he has the same reasons to accuse me.—But yet, Miss P——, though I cannot boast of any great love for my husband, my situation is deplorable. You must imagine the troubles of a virtuous mind.

I have been with the Count twelve months. I have been a mother—now at once deprived of father, mother, child, and husband! Beralti also, the idol of my soul, is gone perhaps for ever! Perhaps I may never see him more. Death, in all probability, may have put a period to his sufferings.—O Heaven! You, my friend, know not, and I hope you may never know, the tortures my heart now feels. When I think of all these things, you must suppose me wretched; though I solemnly declare, I should feel more tranquillity in living distant from the Count, than I can possibly enjoy in his presence, as his caresses give me pain unutterable; and a shew of kindness, when we are conscious it flows not from the heart, silently reproaches, and is more afflicting than indifference. At least I think so, prepossest as my heart is in favour of the Marquis, on whom I cannot bestow a thought without a crime.

“ Tell

"Tell the Count I will expect him and Zephyrine. Tell him, I have taught myself to forgive the anxiety he has cost me—as I am not inclined to think he would be guilty of intentionally deceiving. I have ever entertained the highest ideas of his honour, and will not falter now. Say too, I wish to concert the means of my leaving the Castle of Bezanto, without the Duke di M——'s being acquainted with the secret of his former marriage."

I then stepped to the western chamber, delivered my friend's message, and returned to her to talk away the time till they arrived.

Palmira seemed sooner reconciled to her fate than I could possibly have supposed. "I am resigned," said she—"I am resigned to all Heaven's rigid decrees. Will you believe me, I shall feel more content in a separation from the Count, than enjoying all the wealth and honours the world could bestow

with him. I wish him happy, let my ill-fated destiny be what it will, but every day I am with him adds an additional distress. The Marquis *will not* be forgotten, and vain is every effort to that purpose. When I am absent from the Count, fate surely will not refuse me the melancholy consolation of remembering there once existed one so dear to me, and of whom I have received some favours, that (if love had no share) could not be obliterated from a grateful heart."

In the afternoon the Count and Zephyrine paid their visit. Palmira received them with a natural grace, though she was evidently much indisposed and embarrassed at having heard a detail of events that so immediately concerned herself. Zephyrine felt for her situation, and appeared to suffer great agitation, though a tender pity beamed in her eye for the forlorn state of Palmira.

The

The Count, as soon as he entered, dropped on his knee, and earnestly implored her forgiveness of an error unintended, the recollection of which had given him uneasiness not to be described. He continued giving her the most solemn assurances of his innocence, and sorrow for what had happened, and made a repetition of almost every particular he had told me.

"Rise, my Lord," said she, "I am inclined to believe you. I forgive you sincerely; and that you and this lady may be happier than I ever was, or I fear ever shall be, is my fervent wish. I beg you will forbear to mention more of the past; it cannot be remedied, and is additionally afflicting. You, Sir, cannot have the most distant idea of what I feel at this moment."

In compliance with her request, the discourse took another turn, and we passed the remainder of the day as

agreeably as recent events would permit. Zephyrine paid great attention and respect to Palmira, and the ladies seemed very friendly and agreeable.

About ten the Count and his lady withdrew, having first entreated Palmira to remain with them some time after she had perfectly recovered. She politely thanked them, and said she would endeavour to oblige.

I sat with her till near midnight, revolving in our minds the best way for her to act; but being still weak, I begged her to suspend all anxious thoughts till she was quite well, lest it might agitate her spirits, and cause a relapse.

Every day Zephyrine visited us; and in the course of a week Palmira was able to return her kind attention, by visiting her in the western chambers.

At length being recovered, Palmira wished

wished to remove from the Castle of Bezanto—but first entreated the Count to tell her how to act.

It was determined between them, that Palmira should return to Tortona, where many of her jewels, clothes and valuables remained, as she brought but few with her. There she would stay what time she pleased, but forbear mentioning any thing of what had happened to Count Albani. Then she would go to Ranolphi, and take possession of her estates by the death of her father.

The Count not being able to restore her fortune (which he had received with her in marriage) till the decease of his father put him in possession of some money, he would remit her *that sum* as soon as ever it came to his hands; and that if the Duke made any inquiries concerning her, to say she quitted Bezanto on account of her ill health.

Palmira thought this plan the most

eligible—especially as she really thought she should travel for the re-establishment of her health; and very possibly she might take another journey to Montpellier; which would give an air of truth to the report spread, that she was travelling for the benefit of the air; and she positively assured him, she would keep his situation secret, that he should not suffer thereby.

In three weeks we fixed on our departure. The parting was very affectionate on all sides; for I sincerely believe the Count had a great esteem for her—first, as the daughter of his friend, and next, as an unprotected, unfortunate young lady, whom he had unintentionally rendered unhappy perhaps for life. He conducted her to the carriage, followed by Zephyrine, myself, and Lisette. Again she wished them all possible happiness; and we being seated in the carriage, she could not restrain tears

as

as she took the last survey of the Count and his lady.

The carriage then drove on, and we soon lost sight of the Castle of Bezanto—except, on ascending a mountain, we caught a partial glance of its majestic towers—when Palmira heaving a sigh declared, that she had never felt one hour's comfort from the time she entered its gates till she left it.

Our journey was rather solitary—and, circumstances considered, it was impossible to be any other. We made the greatest haste to arrive at the Count's villa, which we reached on the evening of the second day.

We were received by Count Albani with great friendship, and during a week's stay there, nothing was mentioned of the late affair at Bezanto.—Lisette was obliged to be in the secret; but she had given her word to the Count to keep those circumstances con-

cealed, and had received a handsome present for her kindness.

At the expiration of a week we set out for the Count di Montalde's mansion at Placenza. Every domestic was overjoyed to see her. She told them, her health being bad determined her to come to her old residence, in the hopes of restoring it, and that the Count having weighty business could not accompany her. This accounted for his absence, and no more questions were asked.

She immediately sent her compliments to Signora Rosalie di St. Alva, informing her she would wait on her in the morning, as she was not able at that time from the fatigue of her journey.—But how much was she surprised, when, giving the note to a servant to carry, he informed her Signora Rosalie had been married to the Count di Lovisco, and gone from the mansion of
Saint

Saint Alva above three weeks!—She then declined sending any message, but proposed visiting the Countess St. Alva next morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

Was nought around but images of rest,
 Sleep-foothing groves, and quiet lawns between,
 And flowery beds, that slumb'rous influence keft,
 From poppies breath'd, and beds of pleasant
 green.

.....
 And where this valley winded out below,
 The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard to
 flow.

WHEN she visited the Countess, to
 whom she introduced me, she was re-
 ceived with the most tender condescen-
 sion; but the Countess not knowing the
 real situation of Palmira, and Palmira
 being bound by the Count's secret, a
 delicacy on both sides prevented their
 naming

naming the Marquis di St. Beralti. The Countess insisted on our passing the day with her; in the course of which, Palmira inquired after the health of the Marchioness and the young Adelaide.—

“Alas!” replied the Countess, “my sister, mourning the loss of her husband, and grieved to the greatest extreme for the mysterious absence of her son, whom she has not seen for near five months, has so far impaired her health, that, in obedience to the advice of her physicians, she has taken Adelaide and gone to Montpellier. In the mean time her people are not idle; for she has promised large rewards to whoever shall discover the Marquis—dead or alive—and they are searching every where.”

Palmira turned her head aside, to hide her tears, and conceal emotions she was unable to suppress. The Countess gave a heavy sigh, and added, “You know not, nor can conceive, how grievous his absence hangs on us all; for I adored
my

my dear nephew." Here the Countess could proceed no further; for tears choaked the conclusion of her speech, and she retired to a window to weep unobserved.

I saw the conflict that heaved Palmira's bosom. She was unable to make any reply to the Countess, but sat sunk in silent sorrow. At length the Countess sighing said, "But I hope Heaven will permit me to live to see him again!—Oh, I could tell you—but, my dear, it is best for you to remain in ignorance."

Palmira was so much overcome by what the Countess had said, that it was with difficulty I could save her from falling from her seat. The conflict was severe. In a short time she gained sufficient composure to say, "The Marchioness is no doubt unhappy——Ah! I am as unhappy as she is. Could I blot from my memory what has happened within the course of a few months, I might

might perhaps find some comfort;—but, alas! that blessing is denied to me.—Dear, unfortunate Beralti!—Unfortunate Palmira!—But I forget myself—such thoughts suit not Palmira di La Rosa.”—A long pause ensued; after which Palmira said, “It is my design, after I have settled my affairs, which the death of my dear arbitrary father has in some manner deranged, to go to Montpelier. I should be happy to meet with the Marchioness. It will afford me pleasure; for I assure you I am not happy in my native country; and as the Count was not the man of my choice, I shall feel content in being absent from him; the farther the better.”

The conversation then turned on Signora Rosalie. That young lady, we learned, was married to the gentleman she loved, who was gone on official business into Germany, and she accompanied her husband.

Having

Having spent the day agreeably, we took our leave, the Countess promising to pass the next with us.

Palmira was all impatience till she left Italy. A month elapsed, during which time she was settling her domestic concerns; and we had several journeys to make to the various Montalde estates, that they might be left in proper order during her absence; in the course of which time her health greatly mended—the roses began to resume their natural station on her cheeks. At length the day arrived that we were to quit Ranolphi. We took an affectionate farewell of the Countess St. Alva, who intrusted us with letters to her sister, and we then bade adieu to Italy.

We had a tolerably pleasant journey, considering the time of year, which was November, but the weather fine. In our way, Palmira no longer thought it a crime to speak of the Marquis;—by
talking

talking of him, it by degrees wore off that melancholy sadness and languor that had so long preyed on her angelic face. When we arrived at Montpelier she seemed quite an altered person to when I met her there a few months before.

She immediately inquired for the Marchioness di St. Beraltti, and was soon conducted to the hotel where she resided.

The Marchioness expressed the most joyful surprise to meet her—Palmira no less; for she had a most partial esteem for the Marchioness.

Soon after we arrived there, Palmira wrote to the Count di la Rosa, informing him where she was, and requesting, whenever he and the Countess came into France, that they would oblige her with a visit. An answer was soon returned, agreeable to Palmira's warmest hopes. It contained the account of the Duke di M——'s death, expressive of all the obligations the Count lay under, and
that

that concealment was no longer necessary, she being at liberty to resume her own name; and that he and Zephyrine meant to pay her their acknowledgements in person as soon as spring commenced, when he would also restore her fortune.

Joyfully acceptable was this letter. Palmira could now assume her own name, which she had an earnest desire to do, having no actual right to that of La Rosa. She immediately communicated her real situation to the Marchioness, entreating me to give a regular detail of all I had seen and heard, which had so greatly alarmed me while at the Castle of Bezanto.

The Marchioness expressed her joy at a release so much to Palmira's wishes; but added, "Where is the consolation, now my dear Sebastian is no more?—Alas! I fear he is no more; for I can gain no intelligence whatever where he is gone, or what is become of him. I
often

often sit and think till I am ready to die with grief, what two unfortunate young people you are—He unhappy in his first marriage, though he loved Adelaide to excess—and how unfortunate in his second attachment!"—"Oh, Madam!" replied Palmira, falling on her bosom, "we are indeed unfortunate; yet my whole heart has ever been your son's, from the first moment I saw him. Alas! I fear I never shall see him again."

Palmira wept; in which the Marchioness sympathetically joined. Little Adelaide running in crying, from a fall she had received, roused them from their stupor, and claimed their attention.

Three months we staid at Montpelier. At the expiration, Palmira, now Countess di Montalde, thought of fixing her residence in France, and wishing to engage a suitable habitation, nearer if possible the convent of St. Agnes, as she
had

had a great regard for the inhabitants; where also the Marchioness, who every day grew more indisposed, wished to be near her sister the abbess; and she had frequently hinted her desire to remain with Palmira, if her society was agreeable.

Elated with the proposal, Palmira lost no time in endeavouring to procure an elegant house. Fortunately, in less than a month one offered. It had been the residence of an English gentleman, who was on his return to his native country. Fancy could not have formed one more agreeable to their wishes. It was about six miles distant from Montpellier, had an extensive and lovely prospect, being situated within half a mile of the Mediterranean shore. An avenue of stately pines, whose waving branches shaded the sun's rays, led to the house, and gave a pleasing addition to the whole building.

About a quarter of a mile to the left
stood

flood the convent of St. Agnes, whose grey towers rose in solemn majesty above the thick forest of cypress that partly furrounded it.

About twice that distance to the right, and nearer the shore, was the venerable monastery of St. Francis, whose mouldering towers beautifully mantling with ivy and moss, indicated its state of decay. Although the building still retained an air of its original grandeur, and impressed the mind with sensations of monkish magnificence that had presided there many ages past; and though formerly I imagine it to have been one of the most superb structures of the kind, yet the beauty of its present state leaves an impression on the mind of awefully sublime grandeur not easily forgotten or described.

This monastery was inhabited by monks of the Benedictine order. The eye could dwell enraptured on those calm and seemingly peaceful retreats;
and

and while one gazed, a secret, soft, indescribable melancholy, mixed with a kind of religious awe, inspired the mind with a certain degree of fervour, that seemed to lift the soul to Heaven. The matin and vesper bells, from both the monasteries, could be distinctly heard, and very frequently the voices of the religious in the choir chanting seraphic hymns; which heavenly sounds often assailed our listening ears on a serene night. When every thing else was hushed in calm repose, that alone would steal softly murmuring in the whispers of the breeze, and gradually swell more loud.

The Marchioness was enthusiastically fond of so sweet a retirement, and Palmira endeavoured and appeared to feel content. I own the situation charmed me, and these peaceful abodes led me to admire the Catholic religion, and the serenity enjoyed by those in the monastic order.

Beyond the garden, and bending to
the

the east, was a grove of tall trees of various kinds, through which the eye might trace the most enchanting views. We also had a beautiful scene in the distance, of the towering summits of the Pyrenees, whose bold and romantic charms displayed a portrait of nature rudely grand. In many places their heads seemed lost in clouds. Their rugged declivities were covered with thick groves of variegated tints, that rendered the surrounding prospect uncommonly beautiful, and raised sensations of rapture and inexpressible delight.

The garden was charming and fertile, and every thing contributed to render this sweet place a desirable residence.

Pleased with the sweet solitude of this delightful spot, the ladies endeavoured to feel content; and if wealth could purchase happiness, it might be said to be in their power to attain the summit of their wishes. But sorrow, that silent foe to every earthly bliss, equally attends

tends the rich and the necessitated. A secret melancholy and anxiety preyed on the bosom of my dear friends, and embittered every enjoyment and future prospect. Not a day passed in which they did not mourn the Marquis di St. Beralti; nor did one day pass without their visiting the abbess of St. Agnes, who was happy to see Palmira, having a particular esteem for her while she remained a novice there.

The Marchioness, who was always extremely fond of her sister, had often thought of retiring to that convent for the remainder of her days, since the disappointments she had met with in the course of the last twelve months, and the afflicting loss of a son she adored—although she formerly ridiculed the idea of a monastic life. But the mind will alter, as circumstances and occasions vary. Yet the flattering, the delusive hope of once more seeing that beloved son, and

and being rather uneasy at the thoughts of leaving the young Adelaide, though under so kind, so indulgent a friend and protectress as the Countess di Montalde, detained her; but she failed not to go once a day to the convent, and very frequently attended vespers, in which Palmira always bore her company.

Thus time passed away uninterruptedly till May; in the beginning of which the Count di La Rosa, now Duke di M——, and his lady paid us a visit to restore the Countess di Montalde's fortune, and staid with us a fortnight, after which they went to Montpellier, where they designed to stay a short time, and promised to make us another *visit* very soon.

The Marchioness's servants frequently returned to relate what trifling information was in their power to give. But, alas! all inquiries concerning her son were vain, and they almost thought it

time to give over what appeared to be a fruitless search.

Success so very unfortunate at length preyed so heavily on the afflicted Marchioness, that, by the continued melancholy and distress of mind, it reduced her to the last extremity. Unable to suppress the contending conflicts in her bosom, for the mysterious fate of an affectionate and beloved son, she sunk under the oppression—and her disorder increased rapidly, which created fears for her life.

CHAPTER XV.

..... Oft by night I've seen,
By glimpe of moon-light chequering thro' the
trees,
The peasant, with his satchel in his hand,
Whistling along to bear his courage up.
Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears
The sound of something purring at his heels,
Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind,
Till out of breath he overtakes his fellows,
Who gather round, and wonder at the tale
Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,
That walks at dead of night, and, strange to tell!
Evanishes at crowing of the cock.

DURING her indisposition, Palmira
was her constant attendant, who seldom
quitted her bed-side for a moment.—
Every domestic order and concern dur-

ing this interval was reposed in me. The Countess, convinced of my care, resigned every thing, and confined herself to the Marchioness's chamber.

Trifling incidents often excite alarms. In one of my little excursions I was materially so—it was thus: Having neglected (through the alarming state of the Marchioness's health that day) to go to the village, where we purchased exceeding fine poultry, and fearing some might be wanted, I ordered a servant to attend me, and we set out. It being a very fine evening, in the beginning of June, I chose to walk. It was about seven o'clock, and we had little better than a mile to go. Our road lay through the grove.

Arriving at the villager's, the man was not at home; but his daughter sold me what I wanted to purchase, and I ordered it to be carried to the Countess di Montalde's as soon as her father came in.

The

The girl looked extremely confused, but made no reply. I a second time gave the order. She faintly asked, "If they were wanted to-night?"—"Yes," I replied; "the sooner the better."—"La! Mademoiselle," said she, "my father would not go across the wood to-night for the world."—"It is not so late," was my answer, "and I am going there; sure there can be no harm at such an early part of the evening."

"Harm, Mademoiselle!" she reiterated; "if you knew all the stories of that horrid wood, you would think there was. Why, nobody has ever ventured through it after dark these many months. Ah, Mademoiselle! I thought you was a stranger, or I am certain you would not have come here to-night."

My curiosity was awakened by her mentioning the stories of that horrid wood; so I entreated her, as I was really a stranger to any report concerning the place, to favour me with an account.

"I fear if I do you will not go back," she replied. "However, I will tell you what I know, if you are sure you will not be frightened."

I assured her I should not; and therefore, being inclined to hear what she had to say, I sat down, and attentively listened to the following strange detail:

"Several months ago," said the girl, "as some of the villagers were returning from their employ, being obliged to pass through the grove, they were much terrified to hear the groans of some person as if dying. They soon came to the place, where a person lay who was unable to answer them. They raised him, and brought him to the village; but he could not speak, nor give any account of himself; to be sure, he was dreadfully wounded. Every care was taken of him, and in about a week he was able to speak, and say who he was. He said he and his master had been attacked by several armed men, who had robbed

bed

bed them, and murdered his master, and left *himself* wounded in the sad condition found by the peasants; and he asked if we had seen the body of his master.—But that, Mademoiselle, was never seen,” added she with a heavy sigh.

“And who did he say his master was?” I hastily interrupted.

“That I do not know, but my father does,” she replied.

“It is strange,” said I, musing.

“Very strange indeed, Mademoiselle! and you would think it more strange, if you knew all;” and she hesitated.

I entreated her to proceed, as the account had alarmed me; and I wished to know all the particulars of a story which seemed full of unhappy circumstances.

“Indeed, Mademoiselle,” said she, “if I was to tell all that I have heard, there would be reason for alarm:—to be sure, it is not proper for people to believe

lieve all they hear, however." Here I entreated her to make haste, as I feared she had forgot we were going through the grove, and it now began to wear the grey dusk of twilight.

"Well, then," replied the credulous girl, "you must know, that almost ever since the gentleman was murdered there, his spirit walks in that very grove.—Many people declare they have seen it; and if they do not, they often, at midnight in particular, hear the finest music. The servants of the gentleman that lived in the Countess's house before she came, has often told me, that in the night they have heard the sweetest music, but never could find out where it came from; and that they have sometimes seen a person gliding among the trees!—and walk with slow and dismal pace under the garden wall and the windows of the summer-house. And what, Mademoiselle, could it be but a spirit?—Who would walk in such a horrid

horrid place, at that late hour, that had any regard for their lives?"

She ceased.—A sudden inexplicable anxiety awakened in my bosom; for I had often heard the sounds of sweet and divine music pass under my window; sometimes sounding loud and shrill, then gently dying in melodious cadences into distant air. Yet the music was no proof to me that it came from any supernatural agency—I could not so readily fall into such gross credulity; I rather thought some melancholy person might have sought that retired part, to ease a distressed mind, by walking late, and consoling themselves with the soothing notes of music. I endeavoured to persuade her to my opinion; but she strongly persisted in her story, that it could be no other than the apparition of the murdered gentleman, that continued to haunt the grove.

Night drawing on, I wished to reach home; and as her father would not cross

the grove that night, I ordered her to put up a brace of fowls for the servant to take, and to send the remainder in the morning. We departed.

In my return, I could not refrain observing that we met not a human being all the way, so absolutely had their minds been prepossessed with this idea. Renaud, the servant, said it was nothing new for him to hear, but that he forbore speaking, lest it might offend his lady; but it was very true, no person ever came through the grove after dark.

At my return I related to my friend the strange story I had heard. She appeared more serious on the occasion than I could possibly have believed. "Good God!" exclaimed I, "your good sense cannot be so credulous!—I expected you would have smiled at the absurdity of these peasants, in believing that the spirit of the unfortunate gentleman." She interrupted me, "My dear friend,

friend, the most sensible will sometimes give way to weakness inexcusable; and what we condemn in others we often feel ourselves. The sensibility of my heart is deeply affected; reason would assert her dominion, but my misfortunes have almost driven her from her throne. Every thing alarms me now; trifles that formerly I should have despised find concealment in my melancholy mind. Dear Miss P——, I have heard the music. I must confess it astonished me, especially as I had been in bed some time. A few nights ago I started up, and opened the window to see who it was, as the sound came so shrill. In an instant all was hush—not a creature to be seen, or accent heard; not a breath of air moved the leaves, or disturbed the solemn silence that reigned around. I thought it strange; but this village tale excites a degree of wonder I am unable to express.”

“I must acknowledge,” I replied,

"there is something mysterious in the music; yet I cannot bring myself to believe it is any other than some disconsolate person who seeks this solitude to calm the troubles of an afflicted mind; or it is also very probable that somebody has heard the story, and walks about at a late hour at night, to mock their village fears; or, who knows but the musician may have some reason for walking about at night? Never can I fall into the opinion of these people, that the sounds are supernatural, when I reflect on the seemingly mysterious adventures that occurred in the Castle of Bezanto. It may be some one's interest to make the peasants believe this simple tale, but I really am not so credulous. Bezanto has distanced every superstitious thought from my mind."

"It may be so," said Palmira; "but at present my heart is oppressed with a strange and awful conjecture, though I despise to let a supernatural thought for a moment

a moment intrude. Yet, alas! who knows but the unfortunate Beralti——

Oh! my God! I dread to think of him! — I shudder to turn a thought that way, lest he should prove the murdered gentleman!”

“Our doubts can be easily resolved,” I replied, “by inquiring of the peasant to-morrow. But recalling circumstances to mind, I really feel myself a degree of anxiety for the Marquis.— Heaven avert my fears! However, I am determined to listen *this* night, about the hour I heard it *last*.” — “Will you?” — “Certainly,” Palmira replied; “my heart is too deeply interested to omit attending you. As soon as sleep has shed its gentle influence over the unhappy Marchioness, I will come unattended to your apartment.”

We then separated for the remainder of the evening. A ten o’clock I went, as I usually did, to bid the Marchioness good night, and inquire after her health;
and

and waiting till she fell asleep, Palmira and I quitted the room together.

We repaired to my room, and seated ourselves by the window. The night was clear and unclouded—the air perfectly calm and serene—not a zephyr disturbed the stillness that reigned around. It was near twelve. We had observed the beautiful planets rise in resplendent majesty, and pursue their luminous career through the blue expanse of heaven; and others smaller, forming a spangled canopy of inexpressibly sublime beauty. At twelve, the moon in stately grandeur rose majestically over the mouldering towers of St. Francis, and shed her brilliantly silver light over the still waters of the Mediterranean, whose waves were now lulled to soft repose, and where the tall sails were swelling in stately ease.

The plains of Languedoc, the pine forests, and the summits of the awefully grand Pyrenees, descending in bold chasms;

chasms; all felt its partial light, and formed a scene at once beautiful and sublime. The loud sounding clock of St. Francis pronounced the hour of midnight, and echoed through the grove. St. Agnes, in gently stealing murmurs, struck twelve also. All nature seemed hushed to rest. On a sudden the sound of sweet and melodious music assailed our ears; each started in amaze, and each listened with silent deep attention. Oh, how sweet!—It soon died away in soft and gentle murmurs, till it was lost in distance.

“ I cannot tell what to think of this,” said Palmira, rather uneasy; “ for I am sure I saw no one pass beneath the window, and yet the sound appeared just under it. However, we will wait, and listen to its return; perhaps we may hear it again.”

The night being uncommonly fine, we sat expecting the return of the music,

he, but had not the satisfaction of hearing it any more.

Palmira grew extremely thoughtful; and we soon after retired for the night, though not a little alarmed at what we had heard.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVI.

Death only can be dreadful to the bad;
To innocence 'tis like a bug-bear, dress'd
To frighten children. Pull but off his mask,
And he'll appear a friend.

IN the morning I found my friend had passed a night of great anxiety and agitation. Her idea that the Marquis had been the sufferer, had caused her so much uneasiness, that she was unable to get up at her usual hour, and therefore took her breakfast in bed.

I was extremely grieved at her thinking so seriously of what had passed, although I could not divest myself of those disagreeable apprehensions that
always

always attend uncertainty. I determined, as soon as the peasant arrived, to have my doubts satisfied; and accordingly waited his arrival in the outer parlour, with no small degree of impatience.

He no sooner appeared than I began to make inquiries concerning the music I had heard, and the report spread abroad of the haunted grove, entreating him to tell me all he knew, and whether he ever had heard the gentleman's name.

"Name! — Bless you, Mademoiselle, why, his name is no secret. Every body knows his name; it was the Marquis di St. Beralti!" — As he uttered the Marquis's name, my throbbing heart seemed to sink within me. I was overcome nearly to fainting, and caught hold of a chair for support, to save me from falling; and I involuntarily exclaimed, "Beralti! — the unfortunate Beralti is no more!" — Fortunately
tears

tears gave me relief, and I felt, by myself, what would have been the situation of Palmira had she been present at this wretched discovery.

The peasant, seeing my agitation, said, "You knew the gentleman, I suppose? I am sorry, if I have brought you ill news, or been the means of distressing you; but even children talk of the Marquis di St. Beralti."

"Alas! my friend," said I, "your words have caused me extreme uneasiness; but let me beg of you not to mention his name, or fate, to any one in this house. The Marchioness his mother now lies dangerously ill above, chiefly on account of his mysterious absence; and to let her know the truth, would be certain death. Her servants are every where seeking him on a fruitless search. I dare not tell her what you have informed me, and I again entreat you will not mention his name."

I then made him a present of some

liures,

lives, and hearing a foot-step approaching, I hastened his departure, fearing it might be Palmira.

I was so much affected at the intelligence of the Marquis's death, and so ill able to conceal the distress of mind that oppressed me, that I feared to trust myself in the Countess's presence, lest she should perceive my agitation, and inquire the cause.

I waited a considerable time endeavouring to tranquillize my spirits, and revolving in my mind what to say. I dreaded the effects the fatal truth would have on Palmira, and thought, in this case, dissimulation would be excusable; for while she remained in ignorance she could but be uneasy; but convinced of the dreadful certainty—alas! what had I not to fear from a person who loved with an enthusiastic fondness? At all events, I determined this once to deceive her, and give her a false name, as told me by the peasant.

As

As soon as I had somewhat composed the alarm my spirits had experienced, I went to her chamber, and as well as I was able gave her the account I had proposed.

"I am happy," she replied, "that it was not Beralti; but yet I lament the stranger's misfortune. I was anxious to see the peasant; but your inquiries, my dear, have been the same."

I dropped a silent tear, and my heart seemed to chide me for so cruelly imposing on her; but I had said it, and I hoped in a short time to be able to bring about the sad truth, and perhaps appease her hapless mind.

In the afternoon she received a letter from the Duke di M——, informing her that he and the Duchess would accept her kind invitation of remaining a month with her, before they returned to Italy.

I was rejoiced at this proposed visit, as it would take up some of her time,
and

and prevent my making replies to inquiries I should not know how to answer; and by the time they left the villa, the ill news might arrive by one or other of the servants, and I might be spared a recital of what would grieve my heart to name.

We busied ourselves in preparing the apartments for their arrival, and in two days after they arrived.

Our house was become a little more cheerful; the Duke and Duchess appeared happy; the Marchioness seemed to recover. But our cheerfulness was of short duration. In less than a week she relapsed; and fully convinced that she was drawing near her end, she requested a notary might be sent for, that she might make her will.

This sad affair turned our house from the small share of joy it had recently felt to sorrow, and a melancholy gloom presided every where. The Duke would have taken his leave: but Palmira declared it would be a charity in him and the
Duchess

Duchess to stay and soothe her in her distress; which they kindly condescended to do.

The Marchioness's will bequeathed three thousand *livres* to the convent of St. Agnes, to allow her to be interred in the tomb of her daughter-in-law Adelaide; three thousand *livres* to the monastery of St. Francis, where her husband had received the early part of his education, to permit the choir of that place to attend her funeral to the convent of St. Agnes, and sing a requiem to her departed soul. Palmira was to order her funeral as she thought proper; to whom she left a valuable legacy, and a considerable present to me. The bulk of her fortune was to remain for her son; but if he was not found, it devolved on Adelaide, whom she resigned to Palmira with a tenderness that affected me beyond description.

During this period of sorrow, the mysterious minstrel was almost forgot, although

although the music often assailed our ears at the silent hour of night; but we never could discover who it was.

Three days after the Marchioness had made her will, she expired, blessing Palmira, and fervently hoping her son might yet return and make her happy. Alas! thought I, how vain are thy hopes, when soon thou wilt meet him in the realms of bliss!

She died, holding Palmira in one hand, and Adelaide in the other, gazing alternately, till the hand of death closed these dear objects for ever from her sight in this world.

Palmira had every need of comfort. She loved the Marchioness with a tenderness truly filial, and her death was affliction. She now seemed deprived of all her friends, and her heart was a stranger to peace and consolation. The Duchess di M—— kindly endeavoured to mitigate her sorrows; but her mind could entertain no other guest but grief, and

and it was with difficulty we forced her from the chamber of her departed friend.

For little Adelaide her tenderness increased even to dotage, who was thus a second time cast on her care. That lovely child had now no friend in the world but Palmira, who felt the most poignant sorrow for her forlorn state; for the Countess di Solano, though she had partly promised her protection, had never once seen her, or made any inquiries concerning her, since her mother's death.

CHAPTER XVII.

..... Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?

Sooner or later all things pass away,
And are no more.

..... The reconciling grave
Swallows distinction first that made us foes,
Then all alike lie down in peace together.
When will that hour of peace arrive for me?
In Heaven I shall find it.

ON the following day Palmira gained composure sufficient to order the funeral, and sent the account of the donation left to the convent of St. Agnes, and her desire of being buried there—a circum-

circumstance of which the abbess was apprised in her sister's life.

A note was also dispatched to the abbot of St. Francis, requesting the attendance of the choir on the third day at the funeral of the Marchioness di St. Beralti, who had bequeathed them three thousand livres for so doing.

The melancholy situation of Palmira's mind, rendered more distressing while the body of the Marchioness remained in the house, made me anxious for the removal as early as decency would permit; for she frequently continued in the room for a considerable length of time, indulging that silent affliction which I greatly feared would be injurious to her health.

The morning preceding that day on which the funeral was to take place, before any body was stirring but the servants, a singular circumstance happened, which, when related, extremely surprised us.

A plain-looking elderly man knocked at the door, and inquired if the Marchioness di St. Beralti did not at that time lie dead there?—Lisette replied, “Yes.”

“May I entreat the favour,” said the stranger, “of seeing her?—I have been an old servant in the family, and beg leave to kiss my dear mistress’s honoured hand once more.” Lisette thought that in consenting to his request she could not offend, especially as he said he was an old servant; and her simple honest heart admired his attachment to his deceased lady. She therefore immediately led him to the chamber where the Marchioness lay in state in a style of magnificence suitable to her rank, and the respect every body had always shewn her.

Lisette said, she observed the stranger seemed greatly affected as he entered the chamber, and even shed tears as he approached in extreme agitation to

remove the lid of the coffin. He looked on her face, which was much altered by the deep sorrow she had so long undergone, with fixed attention and anxiety, and indulged a silent solemn grief as he kissed her pale cheek. He exclaimed—“ Oh! my ever honoured lady, little did I suppose, when last I saw you, it would be the last in this world!—What a change!—Silent is that tongue whose tender accents carried in them a charm; inanimate that heavenly form, that I with numbers have admired with delight; and dim those eyes that beamed with pleasure and benevolence on all around her. How many in thy life hast thou made happy!—How many will thy death make wretched!—Pray, young woman,” turning to Lisette, “ what was the Marchioness’s complaint?”

“ Alas! Sir,” she replied, “ I sincerely believe, were I to speak my real thoughts, that the distress of mind she

G 3 laboured

laboured under was occasioned by the mysterious absence of her son; at least, I have often heard my mistress mention *that* as the cause; for her anxiety increased every day, and none of the many servants she sent out to inquire after him, dead or alive, has ever brought her any satisfactory account of him. Perhaps you are one of those servants?" "No," he replied, "but I am very unfortunate in not knowing where the Marchioness lived. Had I known that she had employed people to seek her son; if I had offered my poor services, perhaps my endeavours might have been more successful. I never heard till yesterday that she was here. Pray, how long has she lived in this place?"

"Three months almost," was the reply. The stranger then asked her, "if the house belonged to the Marchioness?"

"No," answered Lisette, "it belongs
to

to my mistress. She was only a visitor here, and had a great esteem for my lady."

"And pray, who is your lady?" he inquired.—"My lady is the Countess di Montalde," replied Lifette.

"The Countess di Montalde!—the Countess di Montalde!—Good Heaven! how came she acquainted with the Countess di Montalde? I never knew that the Marchioness had any acquaintance with that lady," said he eagerly.

"The Marchioness was at Montpellier for her health, when my lady and I came there also for the benefit of hers," said Lifette, "and there I believe their friendship commenced; for the Marchioness, as well as the Countess di Montalde, grew tired of Montpellier. My lady proposed taking this house, and the Marchioness wished to reside with her. Oh! Sir, your heart would ache to see my dear lady's sor-

row for her loss—it is extreme, for she doted, I may say, on this poor, dear, good lady, and has given her most diligent attendance ever since she fell ill. God bless her! She is now happy, I hope; for I am sure she has been miserable ever since I knew her, till now.”

“What sweet child is that?” said he, (seeing Adelaide run into the room, calling Lisette) at the same time struggling to stifle the emotions Lisette’s account had raised. “That, Sir, is the Marchioness’s grand-daughter, Adelaide; and will, if her father is not found, inherit the estate and title of her grandmother—but is now my lady’s child; for the Marchioness left her, as the most precious gift, to the friendship and protection of the Countess di Montalde; and I assure you, my lady is excessively fond of her.”

The stranger kissed the child, and said, “she was much grown since last
he

he saw her ;" again took a melancholy survey of the dead Marchioness ; and, oppressed with a conflict of uneasiness, which almost prevented him from speaking, faintly thanked Lifette, and abruptly left the room.

Lifette followed him to the door, and saw him turn into the grove.

When we came into the breakfast parlour, and heard the occurrences of the morning related by Lifette, it very much astonished us. Neither of us could have any idea who the stranger was. An old man—and formerly servant to the Marchioness—we hoped he would return again, at a time when Palmira could see him, that she might ask him some questions. She rather blamed Lifette for not letting her know a stranger was there, if a servant, that he might be rewarded ; but Lifette excused herself, by saying she was fearful of disturbing her, as she knew the Countess had received but little refresh-

ment by sleep since the Marchioness's death.

Thus this visitor passed, although we much wished to know who or what he was; and the funeral taking place on the morrow, we were busied in making preparations.

On the evening of the following day the funeral moved on to the convent of St. Agnes. About half an hour previous thereto, the choir of St. Francis passed our house, in their way to the convent. As the Marchioness had no friends in that part, and Palmira being fearful of appearing wanting in respect to that lady, she entreated the attendance of the Duke and Duchess di M——, who, from esteem for the amiable Marchioness, were ready to offer themselves. The Countess di Montalde and myself followed next the body, the Duke and Duchess next, and the two favourite servants of both ladies after.

Our reception at the convent was truly

truly affecting. The abbess was the sister of the Marchioness. Her pious thoughts had fervent hopes of that dear sister's attainment of eternal felicity; but then it was a beloved sister, whose loss in this world she could not forbear lamenting, though she herself had a long time renounced it.

At the porch we were met by the abbess and her religious, who proceeded in awful solemnity to the chapel. The vault of Adelaide was opened to receive the Marchioness, and fully exposed to our view the coffin of that lady, not in the least decayed.

As we entered the chapel, the choir of both convents, arranged in separate compartments, began a solemn hymn, which surely had an awful and grand effect—such as in my whole life I never before witnessed, and which greatly increased my admiration. That ended, the body was deposited in the vault, and the ceremony proceeded. Another an-

them was then sung ; and whether from the grief that oppressed her, the sound of any voice, the recollection of any former occurrence, or what cause soever, I then was unable to determine, but Palmira, after seeming to listen with unusual attention, was of a sudden so much overcome, that she sunk lifeless to the ground in a fainting fit. I raised and supported her in my arms. The Duke and Duchess gave every assistance her situation required. To accelerate her recovery, it was necessary to withdraw her long black veil, which during the ceremony had obscured her face, to allow the air to revive her. To give her assistance I also removed mine. The Duke, seeing her indisposition, was very assiduous: As I supported her in my arms, in a short time she recovered; nor could I risk a return of her malady by replacing the veil.

The heavenly music continued, but a fresh alarm once more interrupted the ceremony.

ceremony. One of the monks in the choir was suddenly taken extremely ill, and sunk into the arms of several of his companions; which hindered the hymn from proceeding, and excited the tender concern of Palmira, so recently recovered from indisposition herself, that she felt uneasy at his illness, and, seeing his situation, exclaimed — “Look to the monk!” with a degree of tenderness peculiar to herself.

The monk, unable to finish the service, was carried away by some of his companions, and the ceremony concluded without them.

The mourners then taking a last melancholy survey of the body, retired with the abbess and her attendants to a room, where they continued an hour in fervent devotion. Then we paid attention to the wise admonitions of the lady abbess, who endeavoured to convince us that life was vanity, and death a certainty,

tainty, to which sooner or later we must all arrive; and offered every tender consolation in her power, to mitigate the sorrow we all laboured under for our weighty loss. She reminded us, that in the Marchioness she had sustained the irreparable loss of a beloved and affectionate sister, whose death could not be sufficiently deplored; but that she trusted *that* dear sister was now happy—free from the troubles and cares of this world of pain and anxiety, enjoying everlasting peace and joy in that to come. “And,” added she, while the tears stole down her cheek in silent sorrow, ready to contradict her assertions and tranquillity, “is it not sinful, my daughters, in us, to wish her return, knowing how unhappy her latter days have been? You, Palmira, know her sufferings, her sorrows, and the afflictions that have brought her earlier than we expected to the grave. (It is to be observed, the Marchioness

Marchioness was only forty-two years of age.) Then are we not selfish in our desire to have her longer with us, and, because we found a pleasure in her society, to have those sufferings prolonged—when we hope and trust she has entered that glorious eternity, which we are early taught to believe is the certain reward of the good? I have lost a sister, you a friend, and the world in general a friend. And, oh! my dear children, Heaven grant our last moments may be as irreproachable as hers, and may we all enjoy as blessed an hereafter!”

Thus spoke the abbess of St. Agnes; but habit, and the long continuance in the holy order, had accustomed her to conversations and reasonings of this nature: but on the present occasion, the loss of a worthy sister, real grief affected the heart of the abbess as much as our own, and she shewed little more fortitude.

tude than any of us. Palmira and the abbess retired to a remote part of the room, and devoted some time to silent and uninterrupted sorrow.

We all received her blessing, and soon after returned to the Countess di Montalde's house.

Grief accompanied us. Palmira's heart was sensibly affected by the death of this worthy lady, whom she honoured as a parent, and felt a tenderness equal to parental. Indeed the benignity of her manner, her sorrows, and her affection for all around her, taught every heart to revere her for qualities rarely found.

The Duke di M—— and his Duchess exerted their utmost efforts to console her, but to little effect—accustomed as she had been to love and honour the Marchioness, more particularly for the sake of her son, which every day convinced us of the im-

impossibility of blotting him from Palmira's mind.

The Duke admired the constancy of her attachment; and while he admired, a secret consciousness of being the cause of her separation from the lamented Marquis, and knowledge that she wasted her days in unavailing sorrow for his loss, rendered him frequently uneasy. He resolved to make every possible inquiry as soon as he should quit the villa; and seemed resolved to take a tour through France, for no other purpose but to restore the Marquis, and ease, to Palmira, as the only reparation in his power.

With this hope, though he concealed his kind intentions, they reluctantly took leave of the Countess in a few days, finding their stay did not lessen her solicitude. They designed first to stay a few days with a relation at Narbonne, previous to their setting out on this intended

tended journey. But, before they left the villa, they made Palmira promise to visit them when she returned to Italy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Last night of all

When yon same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course to illumine that part of
heaven

Where now it burns—the bell then beating one—
. it came again.—

By Heaven! I could not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

PALMIRA's grief turned to a settled melancholy, which all my endeavours were ineffectual to abate, or the endearing innocent affection and prattle of the tender little Adelaide to soften. But time alone roused her from her stupor, and pleaded for her efforts
to

to become cheerful, if only for the sake of that infant sufferer, who claimed all our tendernefs and regard.

“ Yes,” exclaimed ſhe, “ for your ſake, ſweet orphan, will I endeavour to conquer my afflictions, and for the ſake of thoſe dear parents. The loſs of one ſits heavy on my mind; but for the other, I do not deplore his loſs adequate to my feelings or my accumulated miſfortunes. But the ſecret torments of my heart no one can penetrate. Yes, my lovely child, I will ſtrive to live—to combat thoſe contending paſſions. I will live, my Adelaide, to ſupply their place. I will be your mother and protectreſs.”

Thus ſix weeks rolled away in unavailing grief; during which time the muſic which had formerly claimed our attention was no longer heard. The laſt time we recollected to have witneſſed its ſweet and ſurpriſing effects, was the night preceding the funeral of the

the Marchioness; on which *night*, whether occasioned by our melancholy sensations, or from its uncommon sweetness, I know not, but I thought in my life I never listened to such divine music. It seemed, as it were, to lift the enraptured soul to Heaven. I thought it somewhat singular, that after this time we heard it no more, and often hinted to Palmira my observations, in hopes that diversity of subject might make an alteration in her melancholy ideas.

I now resigned all thoughts of hearing the mysterious minstrel any more; when suddenly, on a dark and gloomy night, after I had retired to sleep, the sound of sweet and distant music, borne on the loud whispers of the wind, which on that night was particularly stormy, broke on my slumbers, and roused me to be an attentive listener.

I arose

I arose to look; but the weather being extremely tempestuous, and the moon obscured by heavy black clouds, hindered my seeing any one; though at intervals the sound came loud and shrill in the sighing of the hollow blast—— my window being higher than I could observe with distinction who passed beneath — for certainly I thought, *that night* in particular, I heard the sound of foot-steps.

I recollected that the summer-house, about half way down the garden wall, looked into the grove, and being so much nearer the earth, one might the more easily perceive who passed.

There was a communication, by a long gallery, through the library, from the house to this place, without going across the garden; so that I could easily retire there, after the family were gone to rest, without alarming any one; — which I determined to do

do before I mentioned it to Palmira.

On the ensuing night I silently repaired to the summer-house, and, having shaded my light, opened the window—anxious to learn, if possible, who it was that continued to walk about at that late hour. I feared to let Lifette know my intention, as she was not the most courageous; and having no idea of harm happening to me, I went alone.

The night was more calm than the preceding one. I sat listening to the low murmurs of the wind, and contemplating the gloomy prospect that surrounded—lawns, woods and mountains, all blended in one russet shade.

In about an hour I heard the distant sound of music swell harmoniously in the breeze, and gradually approach more near.

Eager to see if possible the musician, I leaned out of the window, and continued

tinued to do so, as the sound drew nearer; till at last I fancied I heard the foot-steps of somebody at a short distance; and immediately the soft strains of a lute, which had for some minutes ceased, touched my ear with most harmonious melody.

By the light of the moon I perceived a tall, stately-looking person with a lute walk beneath the summer-house, and continue along to the end of the garden wall; where again renewing the enchanting notes, they seemed to come for a considerable time from the same place.

I certainly thought this could be no supernatural appearance, and would have given the world to know who it was that sought this midnight solitude. In the morning I related to Palmira what I had heard and seen, and proposed waiting the ensuing night, at the same place, to endeavour at a discovery; to which she readily agreed.

We

We passed a day of anxiety till the approach of night; when eager to satisfy our curiosity, we retired rather earlier than usual to our apartments, and thence to the summer-house, where we waited with anxious expectation till the clock of St. Francis struck one.

"At all events," said Palmira, "let us resolve to speak if we see any body pass. It will ease me of a great deal of heart-rending uneasiness; and it will be also some satisfaction to know to whom we are indebted for this divine music we have so often admired, as well as learning, if possible, the true accounts of the disagreeable reports that are in circulation."

Scarce had she finished speaking, when the melodious sounds caught our ears, and riveted us to the spot in silent rapture.

In a few moments it ceased, and, to our astonishment, a form stood before us.

"Speak to it, Miss P——," exclaimed the Countess wildly.

The sound of her voice claimed its attention. It continued before us.

"In the name of Heaven!" said I, "answer me—who is it plays at this dead hour of night?—O! speak."

The figure laid its hands on its breast, and, looking up, heaved a dismal sigh, and immediately disappeared.

I spoke to Palmira, and asked what we were to think of this strange appearance? Alas! she had fainted away, and needed all my attention.

I endeavoured to recover her, and had but just succeeded, and seated her on a sofa, when a second groan assailed my ear.

Terrified to the extreme, and dreading to quit Palmira without support, another groan, which seemed to awaken every sense, compelled me to attend. I flew to the window in astonishment, to learn the cause. There stood the figure that

that had caused so much alarm, looking with great anxiety up to the window.

Palmira observing my emotion, and suspecting my leaving her was occasioned by the return of the music, suddenly sprung to the window. The moon at that time shone full on the face of the midnight wanderer as well as on us; at which Palmira uttered a shriek, and, lifting her hands to Heaven, called frantically on the name of Beralti!—Another groan, enough to pierce the heart, broke from the breast of the mysterious visitor, and it then darted into the thickest of the grove.

“What do you mean, my friend, by calling on Beralti?” I eagerly asked. “You alarm me most amazingly.”

“Oh!” she replied, “you, my dear, have witnessed this wonderful appearance! Need I tell you, that at first sight the form so much resembled Be-

ralti, that it occasioned my illness? Again I saw him—saw his well-known face. Alas! it certainly is Beralti!—Beralti was the hapless sufferer in this horrid grove, and it is he—the spirit of the ill-fated, murdered youth—at this dead hour of night revisits the scene of his destruction.”

“Surely, my dear,” said I, shutting the window, “you do not believe that spirits departed ever return to this scene of misery and confusion! I cannot think it.”

At the same time the peasant’s account of the Marquis’s death returned with additional force on my imagination, and made me feel rather uneasy sensations.

“We are early taught to despise these ideas,” said Palmira. “I am certain it was Beralti we just now saw; and I am very fearful he is not alive, or how is it possible for me to have resided
1 here

here above eight months, and he not know it, nor seek to see me? I have also had it hinted to me, that he was actually murdered in this grove—though I strove to banish the thought and cherish the flatterer hope. What am I now to think?”

I was silent; for I knew not how she became acquainted with the fatal truth, as I had always studiously avoided entering into any conversation concerning him.

“You are silent, Anne. Do you think the horrid account is true?”

I raised my head to reply, while the tears fell from my eyes, and, unable longer to deceive her, said, I had heard it so reported, but dreaded to wound her by a recital.

“Alas!” she replied in agony, “then I shall see him no more—” and burst into an excess of grief I had never before witnessed.

I now prevailed on her to quit the summer-house, and went to our chambers, where each passed an uneasy night.

Next day being extremely fine, we took a walk to the shore, and after dinner she seemed to wish to walk in that grove which had been so fatal to her lover.

"It will afford me a melancholy satisfaction," said she, "to tread on that spot where he has been, even though the afflicting thought should tell me it was there he suffered."

We walked for about an hour, and at our return bent our way to the garden wall, intending to pass under the windows of the summer-house; but at the extremity of the wall we were a little surprised to find a small door, which apparently communicated with the garden. Our curiosity was somewhat awakened by this door, as Palmira never knew there

there was any way out of the garden into the grove.

We pushed the door, and found it yielded to our hands, and entered a small recess, rudely formed; on one side of which stood a bench of turf, behind it lay a small book in the Italian language, and in it was written, to our great astonishment, the name of Beraltti!

“ Good God ! ” exclaimed Palmira, “ is he dead ? — or does the dear object of all my affections wander thus silent and forlorn in this hapless grove, making his residence this miserable recess ? I know not what to think, but this. If I did not fear the danger consequent on so rash an action should it not be the Marquis — (for still I hope he lives) — I really could almost take courage sufficient to await at this place till the mysterious musician arrives.”

I could by no means approve a thought that appeared dangerous. I

endeavoured to persuade her, that in all probability the book might belong to some other person, though it bore the Marquis's name—entreating her to wait another night, and consider what was best to be done.

At night we again waited for the music, but it came not near the window. We listened, and, as I once before had heard it, it seemed to continue at a distance—I imagined about as far as the cave. It then became silent. We remained at the window, looking if any one passed, but saw not a creature. At length I perceived, by the light of the moon, a man leaning against a tree at a small distance opposite, and looking with minute attention up to us. I whispered Palmira, lest being observed he should retire.

Her agitation increased. Uncertainty who the person was made her fearful of speaking,

speaking, especially as we did not hear the music, nor knew if the person we saw was the person who played. As we were considering in deep attention, he passed under the window, and sighed as he passed; but he being wrapped up in a long cloak, we could not determine whether it was the same we saw the night before.

We then left the summer-house, though still uneasy and anxious to know whom we had seen. In the morning the Countess proposed visiting the recess, to see if we could discover if any one had been there.

We immediately followed the inclination, eager to learn some further account of the mysterious circumstances that had given us such alarm, and fervently hoping to be released from the anxieties occasioned by the doubtful fate of the Marquis.

Arriving at the cave, we plainly per-

ceived somebody had been there since the preceding day ; for the book was not only removed, but replaced by another. That now remaining was an Ariosto, with the name also of Beralti in the cover ; from which circumstance, we were of opinion that somebody had actually been there since we had.

A thought struck Palmira, that she would write a letter, and put it in the book, addressed to the Marquis ; whereby she flattered herself she might come to a knowledge of the truth, whether he was dead or alive.

We returned home to execute this scheme, and she wrote the following :

“ Palmira, Countess di Montalde, entreats the unknown recluse that visits this cave, to inform her, truly and sincerely, whether the Marquis di St. Beralti is alive, and where he may be found. Palmira suffers the most cruel appre-

apprehensions on his account. If he lives, let his affection for his infant daughter bring him to the villa at the end of this wall, and make her happy in his paternal care, tenderness and protection. Fail not, O stranger! to oblige the writer with a reply, as, till that arrives, she must remain in the most excruciating suspense."

This she sealed, and directed "To the Stranger, supposed to be the Marquis di St. Beralti."

"At all events," said Palmira, "it can do no harm to send this letter, and may be a means of discovering the truth, good or bad. I am sure, it is better to be convinced of the worst, than endure these torturing suspicions."

I then accompanied her to the recess, where she placed her letter in the book, just at the beginning; and wishing success to her scheme, we returned home.

I think I never passed a day of such impatience as this was. The Countess numbered the flow-paced hours, and was glad as they rolled away.

We failed not to listen for the music, but were extremely disappointed to hear it not that night. Palmira began to fear her letter would not be received. After waiting till day almost peeped in at the window, she retired dissatisfied to bed.

I do not think the Countess tasted the sweets of repose; for, when she appeared in the morning at breakfast, her countenance was clouded with grief and anxiety.

As soon as it was removed, she said, "My dear, I am fearful a visit to the recesses will be of no use; but we will go," added she, sighing.

We went. But how greatly were we surprised, to find a letter directed to the Countess di Montalde—written with
a pencil!

a pencil! She eagerly opened it, and read the following :

“ If it will be any satisfaction to Palmira di Montalde, to know that the wretched Beralti lives, I can assure her he does——But why tempt him from a solitude, in which alone he can find comfort?

“ The mysterious signature of di Montalde has raised in his mind the most alarming agitations. How can he reconcile that name in the place of di La Rosa?—Or what is to be understood by an appellation so extraordinary?——Beralti’s sufferings have been great, since he parted with the Countess di La Rosa at Olma di Tortona, since which time he has vainly exerted every effort to forget her. But she *cannot* be forgotten; busy memory will often present ideas of former felicity—fled, never more to return.

“ If Palmira could explain to him these seeming ambiguities, he flatters
—him—

himself he dare once more venture himself in her presence—though the sight of her gives him pain inexpressible. Let her leave a line in this place, mentioning where he can see her; but he entreats she will not let her mother know any thing more of the unfortunate Beralti, lest again she triumphs cruelly in his sufferings.”

The Countess saw it was the Marquis's writing; which appeased her fears, though she knew not what he meant by her mother!

“Good God!” exclaimed she, “I have no mother!—what can be his reason for writing thus?”

She then took a pencil from her pocket and wrote, requesting to see the Marquis on the following day, when she had something very particular to communicate, at her own house.

Leaving her billet, we returned home—

home — though Palmira was not very easy in her mind; for the Marquis's letter was all a mystery to her, and she longed for the arrival of the next day, to clear up all doubts.

CHAPTER XIX.

A beam of comfort, like the moon through clouds,
Gilds the black horror, and directs my way.

THE hours seemed to move heavily along till eleven a'clock next day. Palmira remained in anxious expectation, and tormented herself with vain doubts and dreadful conjectures; sometimes flattered by hope, at other times depressed by fear. To relieve the dreary weight of lingering time, she proposed walking in her garden, to endeavour to pass the moments less tediously. I therefore attended her.

We had not been long there, when
Lisette

Lifette came hastily to inform me that a gentleman wanted to speak to me. She believed he had brought me a letter. Imagining it came from my father, whom I hourly expected to hear of, I left the Countess, and hurried to the parlour, where I was informed the gentleman waited.

A tall, elegant young gentleman, dressed in deep mourning (as was myself), rose at my entrance, and received me very politely and friendly. I demanded his business with me. He replied, "I wish to ask you a few questions, if you will honour me with a few minutes attention."

I bowed, and requested him to be seated. He then proceeded:

"I am no stranger to you, Miss P——, although at present you believe me so. It being in your power to give me information that will set my heart materially at ease, is the reason of my applying to you. Your sable habit,
Madam,

Madam, apprises me of your loss and mine—a loss to me irreparable—and my heart silently reproaches me for errors not to be recalled. But do not suffer yourself to be too much surprised.— Know then, that I am the unfortunate Marquis di St. Beralti!”

I started, in involuntary amaze and joy, at hearing from his own mouth the name we had so often spoken of, and believed to be no more. I begged him to proceed.

“I wish, before I trust myself in the presence of my ever-adored Palmira, to know by what strange unforeseen mystery I wait on her under the name of Montalde—when I myself was a melancholy witness of that fatal marriage, saw her resign her dear hand for ever to La Rosa, followed her through all her journeys afterwards with him, and finally saw her depart from Olma to attend her husband at the Castle of Bezanto.—At that fatal moment I turned from

from my beloved, my angelic Palmira, believing, and sincerely hoping, never to see her more. I determined to exert every effort to erase her charming idea from my bosom.—Now, Madam, can you explain these tormenting doubts, that hang so heavy on my mind?—I have seen the Count here—and I am confident of the rectitude and honour of the still adored Palmira, and believe that she would never wish to see me in her situation.”

I replied: “I can, my Lord, satisfy all you wish to know; and if you are not come lately from Italy, you must consequently be ignorant of events, which when told will greatly amaze you.”

I then gave a brief detail of all those occurrences that had happened at the Castle of Bezanto, and during our stay there; informing him of the death of the Duke di M——, and the Count's accession

accession to that title; at which period Palmira resumed her own name of di Montalde.

Joy sparkled in the fine eyes of the Marquis; but a sudden dejection and increased agitation immediately succeeded.

"I am anxious for Palmira's sake," he replied. "What a wretch the Duke must have been to deceive her!—Oh! had I but known his engagements at that time, I would have lost my life before he should have torn her, villainously torn her, from me!"

"My Lord," said I, interrupting him, "I cannot give you a minute recital in so great a hurry;—but I do not believe the Duke was guilty of imposing on Palmira. Give me leave, I will sufficiently explain. But Palmira is impatient to see you: let us not keep her in suspense. I can assure you she is released from all engagements, and

and I refer you to herself to hear more."

I then left him abruptly, and flew to convey the joyful intelligence of his arrival and safety to the Countess.

Overjoyed with information so agreeable, we repaired to the parlour, though Palmira's agitation was extreme. A thousand contending ideas intruded in her bosom. She was compelled to take a seat in an adjoining room, to compose her spirits, before she could venture to appear in the presence of the long-lamented Marquis.

The meeting was truly affecting. The Marquis, in anxious emotion, caught her in his arms, and strained her to his heart, raising his eyes to Heaven in silent rapture and adoration.

Palmira requested he would stay and dine at her house—when she would inform him of every thing that had happened since their separation, and she expected

pected he would oblige her with his concerns in return.

Soon after, we were all pretty well composed, and Palmira minutely related every event at the Castle of Bezanto—calling on me at intervals to tell what I had been witness to;—which much surprised and overjoyed the Marquis, who plainly saw all their grief and misfortunes arose from the impetuous temper and arbitrary disposition of the Count di Montalde, Palmira's father. He concluded with remarking, that he thought the Duke di M—— was more unfortunate than guilty, and demanded more our pity than our anger.

In return, the Marquis obliged us with a relation of his misfortunes since he quitted us at Tortona, saying:

“When I parted from you, determining at all events to obey your hard and impossible commands of endeavouring to forget you, Heaven knows how ardently

ardently I wished for you to become indifferent to me!—I remained for a few days near your habitation, at a private house, the victim of grief and despair—ill in my health, and ill at heart; when one day my faithful servant Bertrand heard that you was going to leave Tortona, and to repair to the Castle of Bezanto. I resolved to see you once more; and wrapping myself up in an old cloak, I went to the road-side to have a last look as you passed.

“Need I say, that the thought of seeing you no more, of parting for ever with all my soul held dear, was an accumulated affliction?—I followed your carriage with an aching heart, and strained eyes, till it disappeared in distance; then turning in despair, I sunk into the extended arms of my faithful Bertrand.

“What could I do? Palmira, my adored Palmira, was lost for ever! This melancholy event had been for some months; yet it afforded me a miserable

consolation, to be near you; though it added to my despair, and I could not acquit myself of a criminality in attempting to see you when your vows were given to another.

“ My late situation as your servant recurred to my mind with every aggravated force of folly and extravagance. To throw myself in a place where I was every hour apprehensive of being detected, wherein I might involve your innocence in supposed guilt, rushed on my tortured imagination, and convinced me of the unpardonable rashness I had given way to.

“ Oppressed by these reflections, I returned to my lodgings, where every thing was insipid and irksome. Despair prompted me to continue there—but how, or why? Every place I turned to reminded me of my loss. From my window the Castle of Olma was directly in my view—that Olma where unknown I had enjoyed many hours of my di-

vine

vine Palmira's company, never more to return! — The road that passed my dwelling, if I looked that way, informed me she was gone for ever. Every thing contributed to my distress. Olma perpetually reminded me of my misfortunes. It became hateful to me. I then thought of going to Locarno. But at Locarno I had also seen Palmira. I therefore wished to shun every place that might recall her loved idea, since it was impossible she could be mine."

CHAPTER XX.

How shall I speak the transports of my soul?

I am so blest, I fear 'tis all a dream ;

Fortune, thou now hast made amends for all

Thy past unkindness; I absolve my stars.

“ ITALY now became hateful to me. I found I never should feel content in my native country. Bertrand persuaded me to travel. I agreed that at all events it would be best to leave Italy.

“ I then returned home to Locarno for a proper supply, and took a flight adieu of my dear excellent mother, little expecting it was for the last time, and

and my charming little Adelaide, with grief and concern I am unable to describe.

“ I did not say any thing to the Marchioness of my intention, but bade her farewell, as if it were but for a day. We then hastily crossed the Alps, and descended to take an excursion in France.

“ I thought of visiting Spain; for which purpose I kept the shores of the Mediterranean till I came near Montpellier; where wishing to remain a few days under a borrowed name, I left the sea-side.

“ From Montpellier I directed my course towards this place—being informed it was the nearest way to a part of the Pyrenees most easy of ascent. I set out accordingly, believing to reach the foot of the Pyrenees that night.

“ But how erroneous are all earthly hopes and expectations!—It was near dusk when I entered this grove. Not fearing any ill, I did not hesitate to

pass it. The evening was uncommonly beautiful; and being a time I always was fond of, and now more than usually adapted to soothe the melancholy state of my mind, the sober veil of twilight led me on unthinking half way through; when Bertrand suddenly alarmed me, by saying he was fearful we were betrayed, for he perceived a number of armed men passing quickly among the trees.

“ I looked round, and immediately saw our danger. We were soon surrounded. Vain was every resistance. I fell overpowered by numbers. Bertrand was hurried away to another part of the forest, and I saw him no more.

“ They then robbed me of all I had, and left me covered with wounds; where I must have undoubtedly lain and died, had it not been for the benevolence and compassion of a poor friar, who passed through the grove, and chanced to see me, some hours after.

“ He belonged to the monastery of St. Francis; and being subject to extreme ill health, which much increased by his confinement, he was allowed permission to walk at day-break, to catch the salutary sea breeze, or, by digging turfs in this place, inhale a salutary refreshment. For this purpose he came into the grove, and accidentally saw me extended on the earth apparently bereft of life.

“ The good father did not long withhold his kind assistance. He raised me from the earth, and, finding some signs of life, began to use every effort to restore me.

“ Having succeeded in awaking suspended animation, he seated me at the foot of a tree, and ran to the convent for help. He soon returned with three others, who wrapped me up in a covering, and conveyed me to the convent of St. Francis.

“ Their kind attention so far accelerated

rated my recovery, that in the course of a few days I was able to give them a particular account of what had happened. I lamented extremely the loss of my Bertrand, of whom I could learn no tidings.

“As I recovered, the prior earnestly entreated me to enter their order—nor did I feel much aversion to do so, when I reflected that Palmira was lost to me, that she never could be mine. I agreed, that at the expiration of a year, if my mind continued then in the same state it was at that time, I would associate myself with them for ever; but charged them to keep my retirement a secret, as I was certain my family would never suffer me to do so.

“My aunt was the abbess of St. Agnes, whose cloister I could distinguish from our monastery. I reflected how peacefully and secure she passed her days—free from the busy storms and ills of life. Love was the cause of her retiring,

retiring, as I have heard my amiable and much-lamented mother often tell, at an early age, from the world—and why might not I feel the same content as she did?

“ My health amended so slowly, that, fearful of my wanting air to establish it, I, like the good monk, was allowed to walk out of the monastic walls. Midnight was my favourite hour; and to hush my sorrows to repose, I sometimes entered the grove with my lute, and soothed my melancholy wanderings by playing airs suitable to the unfortunate state of my mind. For I found, that, as my health and strength recovered, Palmira resumed her sway over my soul; to forget her was impossible; and the more I endeavoured to banish her dear idea from my breast, the more firmly she took possession there.

“ Midnight, then, was the only time I could dedicate unobserved to my lost love. During the day, in company with

the monks, and conforming to the rules and discipline of the order, I strove to drive her image from my mind. But when the silent shades of night embrowned the woods, and clad all nature in one dark garb—then, longing with impatience for the still hour of midnight, I have watched the planets rise in glorious majesty over the tall summits of the mountains, and move on in grand career. Then it was, accompanied by my lute, that I walked towards the grove, and every thought but that of Palmira was banished from my mind; where staying about two hours, I returned to the monastery.”

This accounted for the mysterious music we had so often heard, and which had caused us much alarm. The Marquis proceeded:

“ I cannot describe my astonishment, one day, on being informed that the Marchioness lay dead here, and that she requested the choir of our monastery
to

to attend at her funeral. Anxious to take a last melancholy survey of my beloved parent—for my heart was breaking with grief for her loss—I determined to visit this house early in the morning, before any one was stirring but the servants, and, disguised in a borrowed character, entreat to take a last farewell.

“ My project succeeded. I was shewn into the mournful apartment, which contained the remains of the best of mothers, by a young woman, to whom I said that I had been an old servant of the Marchioness, and all I wished was but to see her once again.

“ Ah ! 'tis impossible to describe my sufferings at that moment. I saw my dear mother dead. I had reason to believe, by what I heard, that she suffered for my loss, and the uncertainty of my fate. I loaded myself with the most bitter reproaches for my fatal secrecy, which, I dreaded, had been the occasion of the death of the best of parents. My child

too, alas! I knew not into whose hands she might fall; and to increase my agitation and embarrassment with augmented distress, I learned the lady of the house was called the Countess di Montalde!—Good Heaven! thought I, the Countess di Montalde! one of the principal authors of my miseries! She joined in forcing my adored Palmira to abandon me, and marry the Count.—Surprised that my mother should be with the Countess, I made a few inquiries, which tended to increase my distress, by the answers I received; and fearful of trusting myself longer I abruptly left the house.

“ Arriving at my cell, I gave a loose to my despair. A thousand agonizing reflections rushed on my tortured imagination, and only served to render me additionally miserable. In what a tumult was every passion tost! I was unable to leave my cell till the hour arrived that called the choir to attend my mother’s

ther's funeral ; when I resolved to go with the rest, and pay my last respects to her sacred remains. But what words shall express my surprise, vexation and distress, to see the Count di La Rosa attend her to the tomb ! I did not see the Countess di Montalde follow her ; but in a short time after I beheld Palmira uncover her face, seemingly indisposed, and the Count offered his assistance. I observed him behave tenderly to the mistress of my soul ; and though happy at all times to see her treated with kindness, yet I could not endure the sight of his attention.

“ Seeing Palmira so unexpectedly was a shock I was not prepared to receive, and could not sustain. The presence of the Count added to my sufferings. I was seized with a violent indisposition, and was indebted to the fraternal care of two of the monks, who conveyed me from the chapel, un-

able to see the conclusion of the ceremony.

“ My illness continued long, during which period my chief thought was Palmira and the Count being so near me. I came to a determination, as soon as I should recover, to leave the monastery of St. Francis, if I found the Count designed to reside at the villa—as I could not bear the thought of the destroyer of my peace thus triumphing over my sufferings.

“ But as I grew better my mind changed. I thought this opportunity one of importance. It is, thought I, the will of Heaven that I should forget her; and to strengthen my resolves, which I acknowledge have been weak, they are now placed near me, to try my fortitude and resolution. I will stay, said I; I will remain at St. Francis!—Palmira, the barbarous Count, her unfeeling mother, nor all the combina-
tion

tion that have made us wretched, shall ever have power to drive me from this peaceful solitude. I will now strive to feel content.

“ Then I again took up my neglected lute, and, remembering that I had sometimes found comfort from its soothing sounds, in my wanderings at night in the forest, I again walked forth, at the still hour of midnight, to calm my mind, as yet tossed by tumultuous conflicts.

“ There is a small aperture in the wall, at a short distance from this place, sufficient to hold one person. To this recess I usually retired, and have sat to play. It screened me from the weather in nights unfavourable for walking, and I cut some turf to make it more agreeable, when such nights rendered it unpleasant in the open air.

“ But to my great mortification and confusion, I had resumed my solitary walks but a few nights, when I accidentally

dentally saw you and Miss P—— looking from the pavilion, as if to watch for somebody. I heard her speak. The sound of her voice chased away all those resolves I had vainly been forming—nor could I resist the desire I had of stopping to gaze on her. It was my adored Palmira! She retired in confusion, I thought. The recollection of what I once was—how happy, had I been so blest to obtain her—drew from my breast the most distressing as well as involuntary sighs.

“ She again followed you to the window, and uttered the name of Beralti! in an accent of distress that convinced me I was not forgotten nor diminished in her esteem. Unable to trust myself so near her, without speaking or complaining, and with a heart torn by every cruel recollection, I darted into the thickest of the grove.

“ I waited with impatience the approach of the ensuing night, in hopes
to

to see her again; but observing, as I advanced, a light in that part of the building where I had perceived her on the preceding night, I ceased to play, that I might advance more near without alarming her. I had the unspeakable satisfaction of gazing on her some minutes without being noticed.

“But what can equal my astonishment, a few days after to find, on my visiting the cave, a letter directed to me, shut up in a book I had left there!

“Imagination cannot form my surprise. Palmira's hand! and calling herself Palmira di Montalde!—How was it possible to be Montalde, when my own eyes were witness to her marriage with the Count? Unable to solve these ambiguities, I ventured to write an answer, though my mind was greatly agitated, and I could not reconcile myself to the mysterious name of Montalde!—I had seen the Count at my mother's

ther's funeral. I could not be mistaken. I felt an anxious desire to have these mysteries explained, and it is from herself I must know all, thought I.

“ I received, in reply, an invitation to her house, where I might expect an explanation, but was fearful of trusting myself with the proposed interview till I had gained some knowledge of the circumstances of Palmira, for I could not easily account for the name of Montalde. I recollected I had seen Miss P—— at the convent of St. Agnes, in company with you, at my mother's funeral. I had also seen her at the window of the summer-house, on different nights, when I have wandered to discharge the fulness of a heart overflowing with affliction and despair. I had likewise some acquaintance with, and particular friendship for her, during my stay at Tortona under the assumed character of Victoria. I thought, if I made my

my inquiries of her, I should gain certain information, which might enable me to meet Palmira with greater satisfaction."

Here the Marquis concluded the recital of his troubles. He expressed extreme happiness on finding Palmira at liberty, nor was his charming daughter Adelaide forgotten in the general joy that filled all our hearts at his unexpected return.

Palmira immediately dispatched a messenger to Narbonne, where the Duke and Dukes had retired; but he having set out some weeks before on his proposed journey, unknown to Palmira, the servant was informed he was then at Dijon, but expected in a few days to proceed on towards Orleans.

No sooner was this known, than an express was sent to Dijon, with orders to follow wherever directed—acquaint-
ing.

ing him of the joyful arrival of the Marquis, and requesting they would return to the villa, to satisfy him with some particulars relative to the late connexion and separation of the Duke and herself — assuring him she should be more happy for the Marquis to hear their real situation, and the motives of their alliance, from the Duke's own mouth.

The Duke immediately obeyed the summons, accompanied by the excellent Zephyrine. He related every particular very minutely, and lamented the misfortune that occasioned him unknowingly to lead himself and Palmira into such an unintended error, of whose virtue, goodness, and gentle disposition, under circumstances so distressing as hers had been, he could not speak too high in praise.

The Marquis, satisfied in all he wished to know, and perceiving the unhappy error into which the Duke had
unfor-

unfortunately fallen, could not forbear lamenting his sufferings at a time when he must have been involved in such extreme affliction; but being anxious to call the lovely Palmira his, he solicited an early day to be fixed on for their marriage.

The Duke and Zephyrine, seeing the Countess hesitate, kindly joined their entreaties; which being unable to refuse, a day was named at the expiration of a fortnight.

The Marquis that day quitted the monastery of St. Francis, and went to reside at Montpellier till the day of their nuptials. Every day he paid us a visit, and past troubles were soon obliterated, in the expectation of at length being united to all each soul held dear.

The marriage was celebrated privately. The Duke and Duchess attended at the ceremony, and continued at the villa for several weeks after this event took place.

I felt

I felt myself superlatively happy, in seeing my friend at last united to the only person she ever loved. The Marquis's tenderness and affection increased for his excellent lady. No one wore a face of discontent, for all was happiness at the villa. Adelaide received the fond love of a father, who till now had had but little opportunity of paying her the necessary regard.

Amidst all this pleasure there was a small alloy on the part of the Marquis. The loss of his faithful Bertrand hung heavy on his mind, the uncertainty of whose fate made him uneasy, though blest with his beloved Palmira.

I then related all I had been told at the village on the night when I went through the forest, and heard the account of the Marquis's death, and his haunting that place. The tale excited a smile from the Marquis. He proposed going next day to the village, to learn if he was any where to be found.

We

We were so fortunate as to hear that he lived with a gentleman of Tholouse —where the Marquis soon went in search of him. The meeting was affecting, as Bertrand had long believed his master was dead ; and that faithful servant, overjoyed to behold his long-lost master, immediately quitted his service to return to him.

I passed near a twelvemonth with this amiable family, during which time the Marchioness presented her husband with a lovely boy, the delight of his parents, who claimed his share of the tenderness lavished on Adelaide.

In the course of the last year the troubles were greatly increased in France, and the memorable destruction of the Bastile took place. But as those events have been so often treated of by more able pens than mine, I shall forbear to say more.

About this period my father returned from his survey, and, by the kind entreaties

treaties of the Marquis di St. Beralti, was prevailed on to stay at the villa for near two months, when his affairs in England called for his immediate return. I was compelled to quit my amiable friends, to revisit my native country. The Marchioness di St. Beralti promised to honour me with her friendly correspondence, as often as the distance would permit.

We then bade adieu to France, reluctantly on my side, for in my life I never had enjoyed such tender, generous friendship as that received from the Marchioness di St. Beralti. I must acknowledge, I quitted them with regret, promising and hoping to return there in a short time. But the troubles in that unhappy country being greatly increased since my departure, and having a large family of my own, has occasioned me to lay aside all hopes of seeing my dear Marchioness (now in Italy) till Heaven, in its mercy, blesses my own
and

and those unfortunate countries with peace—a blessing ardently wished for by every feeling heart, and well-wisher to their country—when I shall be able to present my husband and family to those valuable friends, (though foreigners) such as I never met with in my native land.

FINIS.

and those unfortunate countries with
peace—a lasting peace which for
by every law and well-wisher
to their country which is able
to protect its land and family to
those who are in danger (through foreign-
ers) such as I never met with in my
native land.

